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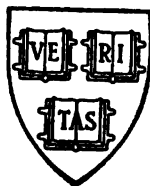
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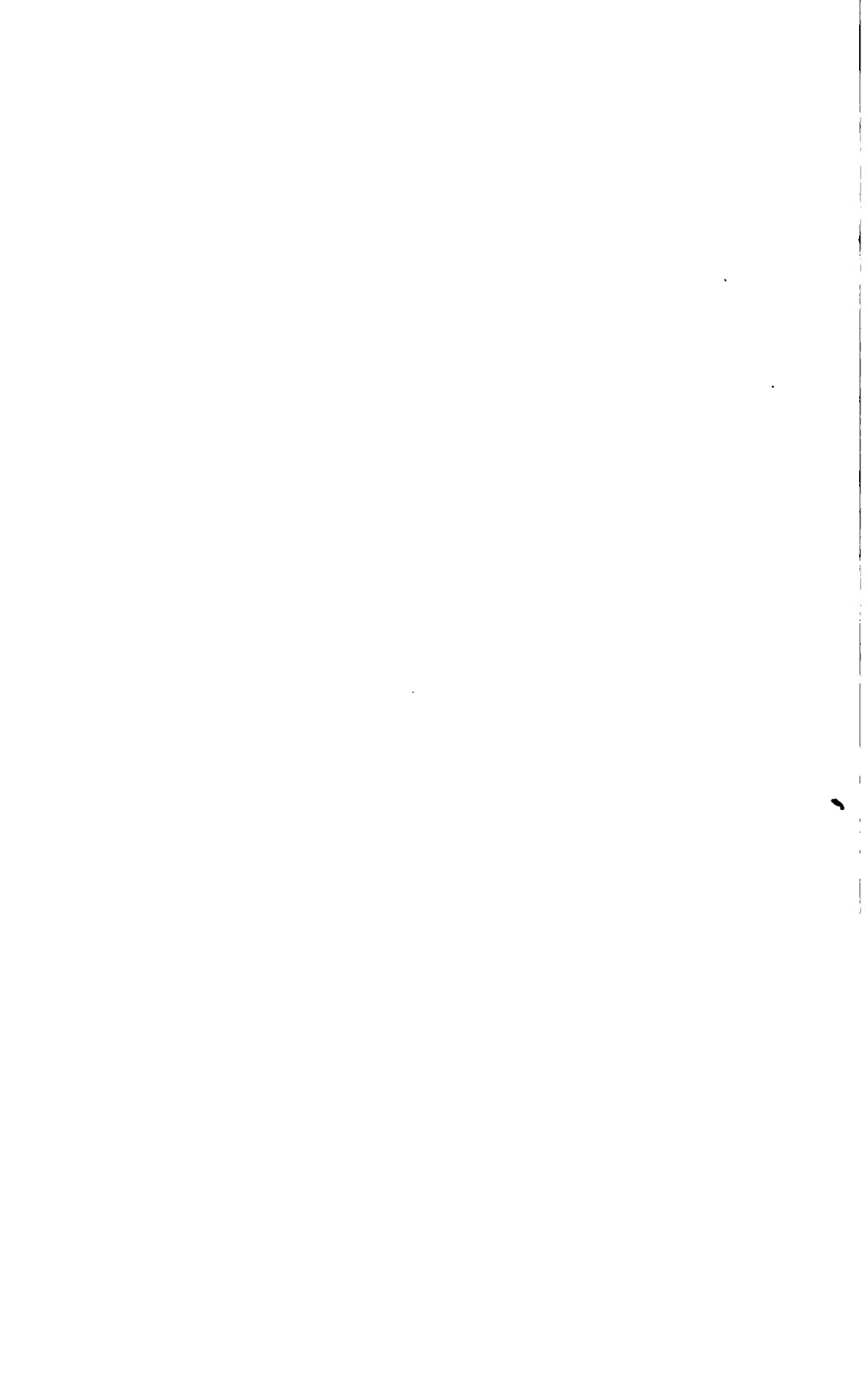


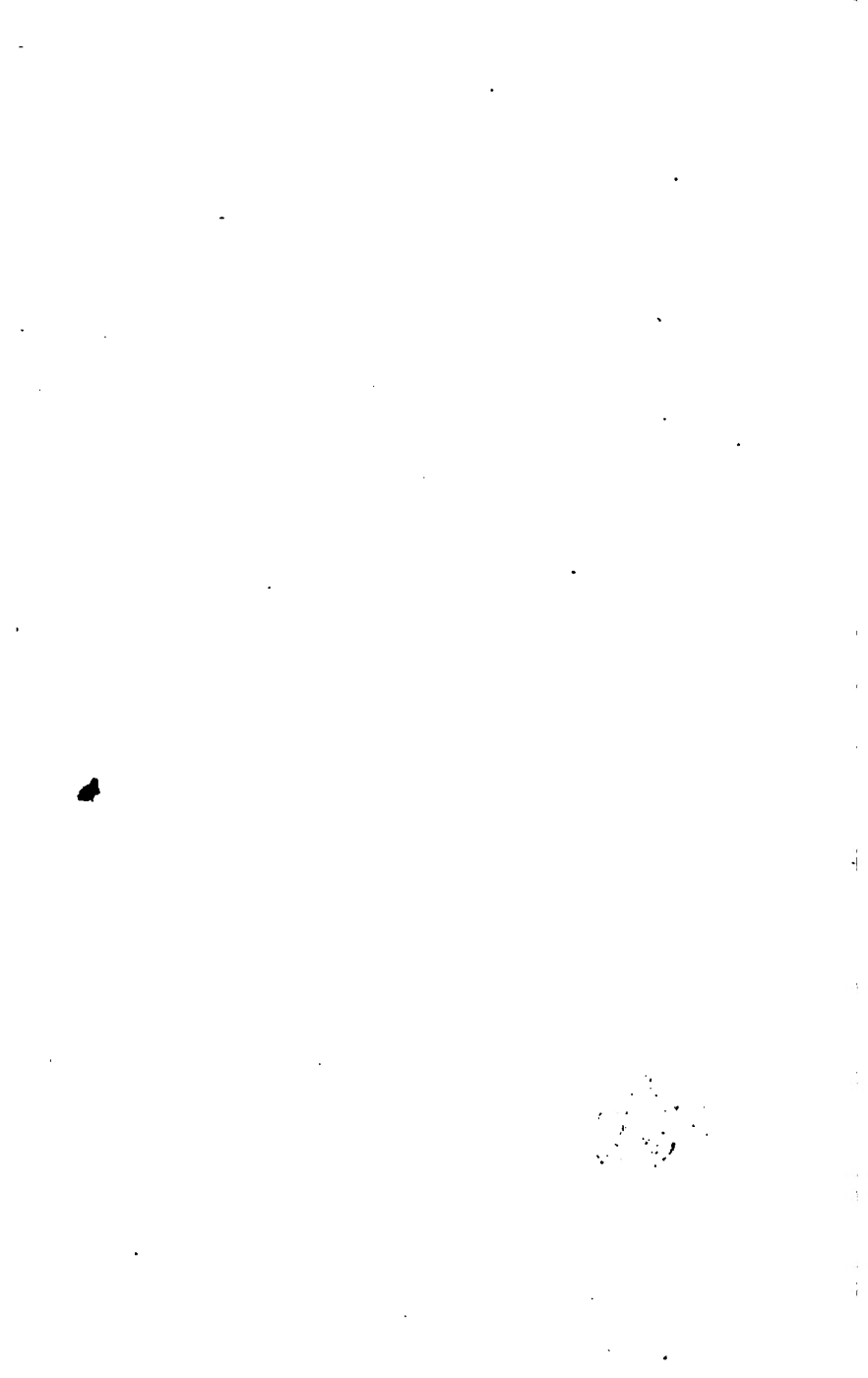
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WILLIAM WILBERFORCE ESQ. M.P.









THE  
L I F E  
OF  
WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

COMPILED FROM THE MEMOIR PUBLISHED BY HIS SONS,  
AND FROM OTHER SOURCES.

BY  
CASPAR MORRIS, M D.

3<sup>d</sup> New-York:  
PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL SOCIETY FOR THE PROMOTION OF EVAN-  
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## INTRODUCTION.

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Two editions of the abridged Memoir, as originally published in this country, were soon exhausted, and another generation having now come upon the stage of life, to whom the name of Wilberforce conveys only an indefinite idea, associated chiefly with his efforts for the abolition of Slavery and the Slave Trade, it has been thought desirable to present once more to the public view the admirable picture of his character, with which his sons have furnished us, by the minute and candid insight they have afforded into its hidden elements of power, as well as its more open features. The copious extracts from his diary, journals, and correspondence, which constitute the great mass of the work now presented, cause him to stand before us, not challenging scrutiny, that would be foreign to his character, but ready to be read of all men as a living expression of the power of that Spirit "from whom all holy desires, all good counsels, and all just works do proceed." That by the influence of the same Spirit the more extensive diffusion of the power of his example may be made effectual to the raising up a great company in this and succeeding generations, who shall follow him as he followed Christ, is the earnest prayer, and will be the abundant recompense of the compiler. The work was undertaken at the request of the Society under whose auspices it is published, amid the pressure of duties of an arduous profession; and has been revised during a short period of relaxation in the retirement of the country. Its lessons are full of instruction for those in either position. They exhibit the "man of God thoroughly fur-



nished for every good work," ever finding some mode by which he may set forth the glory of Him, by whom he has been redeemed; as much in the hours of recreation as in those of toil. The exhibition of his parental character is not the least attractive part of the work, and if we have occasion to lament the lapse of his sons into errors which he strongly condemned, we must still acknowledge his faithfulness in training them in the way in which they should go, and may unite in pleading for them that they may yet be brought back to that better way in which their childhood and early manhood were guided by a father's wisdom and shielded by a father's prayers.

## P R E F A C E .

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It has been well remarked that there is no more powerful instrument of useful or pernicious influence on mankind than Biography. Addressing itself to that propensity to imitation which exists, to a greater or less degree, in every mind, it allures by the force of example, and carries feeling and judgment alike captive in its train. There are those who, during life, pursuing the noiseless tenor of their way, "have shrunk to hear the obstreperous trump of Fame," who have, however, walked so holy, harmless, and undefiled, in the circumscribed sphere in which they have moved, that it becomes a duty to give wider extent to their usefulness by diffusing the knowledge that such an one has lived, and how. Others, the observed of all observers, placed, by the providence of God, in exalted stations, have occupied the many talents committed to their care with equal diligence and devotion to their Master's service. The wide-spread influence of such can not be increased; eulogy is wasted upon them—it becomes defamation. The duty of the biographer of such is to catch as it were the light from their splendid public actions, and reflect it upon the minor virtues of life, that so they may shine, not with a borrowed, but a filial splendor, and attract the attention of the multitude, who, while they may not emulate the greater display, may be led to imitate the smaller but not less important actions which constitute the great sum of duty. This prominent station was occupied by William Wilberforce. Not one nation, but the whole human family participated in the benefit he conferred on his fellow-men. Had he done no more than lead on the battle which resulted in the abolition of the Slave-Trade, his would have been unrivalled honor. Other men have given freedom to their own country—he was the successful champion of humanity; and it may be questioned whether the benefit he conferred on

bleeding Africa or oppressing Europe was the greatest. He stanchd the wounds of the one, while he staid the progress of the other in a career of oppression and cruelty which could not but call down the just vengeance of a righteous God. To Africa, that God has ordained a recompense for her wrongs, in the reflection back upon her darkened shores of the benefits of Christianity which will result from the temporary sojourn of her sons in a cruel bondage on ours ; while to them that did the wrong no result will follow but evil, unless the wrong be repented of and forsaken, and reparation made so far as possible.

But it was not the wrong of Africa alone which excited his sympathy, and drew forth his active exertions for its relief. Wherever a door of usefulness was opened, however wide and large or narrow and confined, he was ready to enter and labor ; and whether it was for the extension of the blessings of the knowledge of the Gospel of Jesus to the benighted millions of Hindoostan, or the handfals of Cheddar—the relief of the temporal sufferings of the victims of war on the Continent, or the poor inmates of the London jail—his alacrity and diligence in doing good were alike worthy to be commended and imitated. There was a holy energy of character and singleness of purpose about him which will always enable its possessor to accomplish great things. Regarding habitually every faculty he possessed as a talent bestowed upon him for the proper use of which he was responsible, his labors were unceasing, that he might be enabled to render an account with joy. He fulfilled closely the directions of one whose friendship was a source of delight to him, *believing* as one who knew that his salvation depended on faith, and *laboring* to adorn that faith as though it were to be found in return for the merit of his works.

To be admitted to the freedom of unreserved intercourse with such a man during his life ; to hear him pour forth from the treasure of his heart the secret thoughts which gushed from its hidden fountains ; to enter with him to the inner chambers of reflection, and join with him in the consultations from which his mighty acts resulted—would have been esteemed an inestimable privilege ; and to this his sons have admitted us. From the period at which he was *converted*, a change which he him-

self describes as being as great as that which transformed the persecutor of the primitive Church into the apostle of the Gentiles, he kept regular records of the daily events of his life and the changing feelings of his heart. What proportion of these have been published by his sons none but themselves know. It has been enough, however, to place his character on the most exalted platform of human excellence. Having adopted for his standard the highest possible model, the example of the incarnate Son of God, and continually comparing himself, not with himself and other equally fallible men, but with this supreme pattern of excellence, his Diary will be found to abound with those humble confessions of unworthiness and guilt which properly result from such self-examination; whilst the testimony of those who, without witnessing or being privy to the struggles by which the inbred corruption of the heart was kept in subjection, saw only the precious fruit which resulted from his self-denying labors, exhibits the impression made by his example on all by whom he was surrounded. It is not, however, to be supposed that his lot was exempt from those cruel mockings, and that shame, and that malignant blackening calumny, the influence of which he has himself so feelingly depicted. These are declared by the unerring wisdom of Him who "needed not that any should tell Him, for He knew what was in man," to be the unavoidable portion of His followers. In the Memoir, we find traces of them enough to indicate that he partook of a large portion of that evil-speaking which will follow good works. But for all he possessed a sovereign balm, of which he continually availed himself in that spirit of prayer which formed the most marked trait of his character. Whether oppressed by the care of empires or the trifling anxieties of life, he still sought that wisdom which God hath promised to bestow liberally on all who seek it; and that he realized the fulfillment of the promise, his whole career, which was most truly like that of the "light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day," affords manifest demonstration. His votes in the House of Commons, his intercourse with society and with his family, were all sanctified by prayer; and at no stage of his career did he appear to be ashamed to confess his

dependence on the grace of God thus sought. How rare an example does he exhibit when we behold him, the familiar friend not only of princes, nobles, and prime-ministers, but sought after as the companion of kings, withdrawing from the glare of earthly greatness and favor to pray with the sick servants of his acquaintance, or the penitent convict in his cell! When we thus see the hidden sources of his strength and power, we can not wonder at the success which crowned all his efforts, nor at the boldness with which he separated himself, when convinced of the necessity of doing so, from those friends with whom he commonly acted in concert of principle and feeling. Such legislators, like the righteous men sought in vain in Sodom, to adopt the idea of Mr. W.'s favorite poet, save a country. Such was the source of that courage which led him to face the threatened violence of the excited population on the one hand, by his vote on the Corn Laws, and on the other to incur the hazard of sacrificing the friendship even of Pitt, when the conflict arose between duty to his friend and his God. There was, however, another feature in his character which, springing from the same source, pervaded equally all his actions. This was his entire independence. Whether in politics or religion, he examined for himself with minuteness of scrutiny and quickness of perception, and when he saw the right he pursued it steadfastly, no matter who saw differently. Yet that this resulted from no hasty determination, followed up by obstinate persistence in his own opinions, without regard to consequences, the Memoir contains abundant proof; and by some he has even been thought too susceptible to the influence of the judgment of his friends. In religion, the same character of mind which led him, at the outset of his career, to forfeit a positive advantage rather than subscribe to articles of faith which he did not hold, caused him, in after life, when the most dispassionate examination had resulted in the full adoption of those very articles, to adhere to them with all the fondness of the most intense devotion; and his Diary abounds with entries which indicate his attachment to the Church of England. Thus, when on one occasion he accompanied a friend whom he dearly loved, and whose Christian character he held in the highest es-



timation, to a dissenting place of worship, he comments on the manner in which it was conducted on his return, specifying the absence of "Scripture-reading and Common Prayer" as reasons for the thankfulness he expresses that he did not belong to their communion; and frequently he remarks in his Diary on the self-denial he exercised in abstaining from frequenting other places of worship, when attracted by eminent preachers, lest his example might weaken the attachment of any to that portion of the Church of Jesus which he esteemed most nearly conformed to the model of primitive Christianity, in doctrine, discipline, and form of prayer. And yet with all this attachment to her formularies, how far was he from that narrow-minded bigotry which would confine the favor of God within any limits! While he wished to see the Church foremost in every good word and work, how ready was he to seek the co-operation of those who thought differently! Methodists and even Baptists were proud of his friendship, and looked to him as their advocate; and he did not hesitate to admit "Friends" to the favor of intimacy, expressing his admiration of their devotedness to every good work; nor did he fear to stand almost alone among truly religious men, in supporting the admission of Romanists to seats in Parliament, much as he deprecated the errors into which he believed them to be fallen. The same entire independence was shown, too, in his views on the great question which so engrossed his thoughts during the forty years of his public labor. If all the advocates of Negro emancipation had manifested the same temper, and prosecuted the enterprise in the same spirit of charity, neither thinking evil nor answering railing by railing, the true supporters of the cause would have had less reason to wish to be "delivered from their friends."

There is no intention of entering here into the merits of this "questio vexata." The publication of this Memoir was not undertaken with the view of its exercising any influence upon it. The circumstances of Great Britain and the United States are so dissimilar, that no reasoning can be brought from the one to bear upon the other. The expression of thankfulness that England could be just while she was generous, which

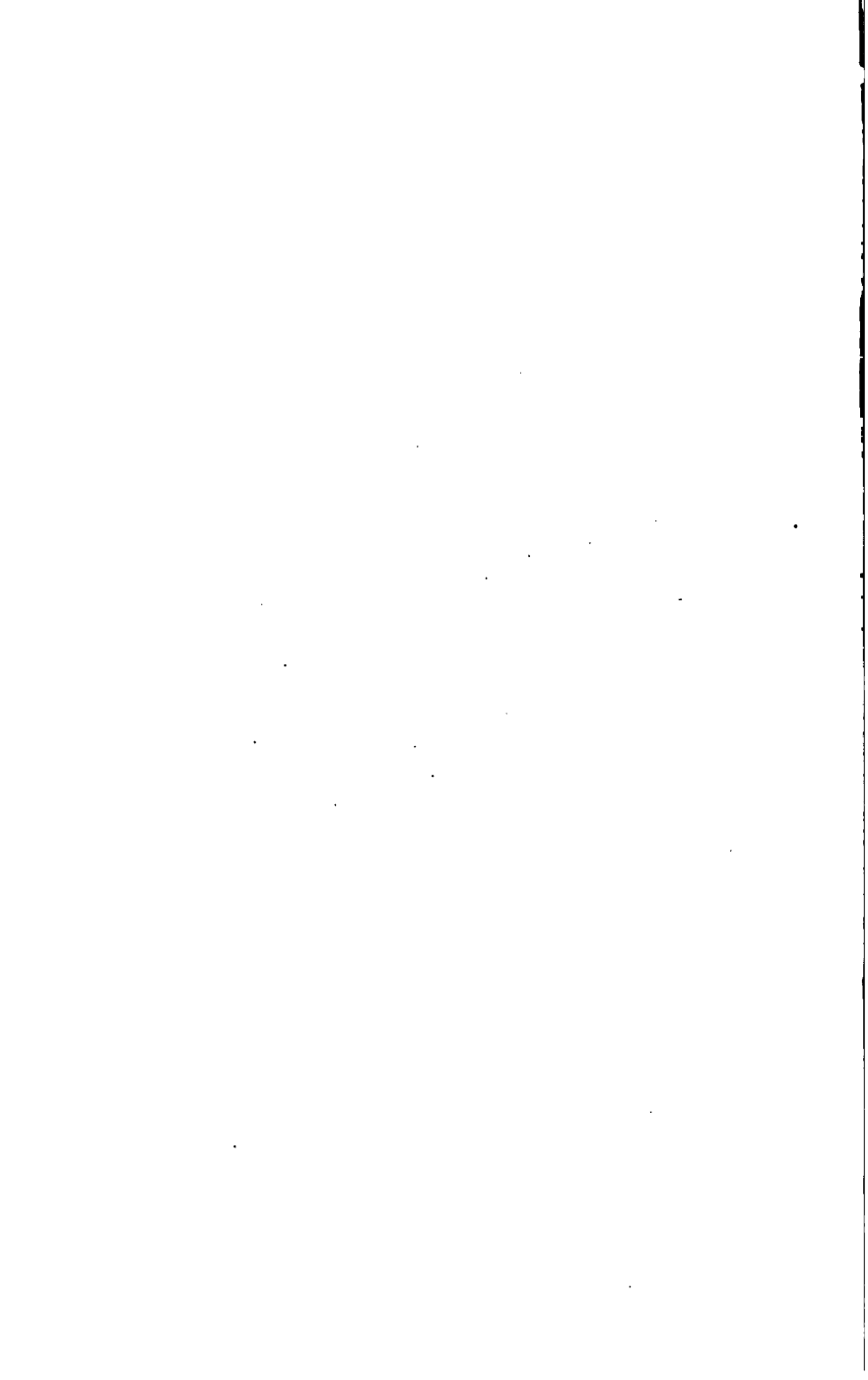
flowed from the dying lips of the great champion of British Emancipation, separates the actors there from the agitators here, not less widely than the ocean which rolls between the countries. Most fervently is the coming of that time to be desired when, through the prevalence of Christian faith and practice, wrong and violence and oppression shall be banished from the earth; when the servant shall be found "doing service with good will as to the Lord and not to man," and the "master rendering to the servant that which is just and equal." But every unhallowed weapon employed in any cause recoils on the head of him that uses it, and every unbidden hand stretched forth in this service but calls destruction on its mover, while the poor objects of sympathy are made to groan in still deeper bondage from the misdirected efforts of their ill-judging friends.

The publication of his work on "Practical Christianity" was another of those efforts which required the exercise of great firmness of principle, not only from the reproach to which it subjected him among worldly men, but still more from its own peculiar character. Stigmatized by the bigoted of one side as Calvinistic, and by those of the other as Legal, it came forth unsupported by any party in the Church, depending for its success only on its truth and conformity to the word of God, and its adaptedness to the wants of man. Yet where is there a book which has more approved itself to the judgment and the heart? Where is there one whose influence has been more extensive? Not to mention those who have owed their conversion directly to its instrumentality, what multitudes have found strength and confirmation of their faith in its pages! But had every copy been destroyed except that which, blown on the wings of chance, as the world would say—carried, doubtless, by the angels of God, each humble Christian will believe—found its way to the lowly parsonage of an insignificant village in the Isle of Wight, still from so small a seed has started up so noble a growth as has caused, and will cause to the end of time, "joy in the presence of the angels of God" more abundant than can now be known or conceived. What countless numbers in every quarter of the world owe their salvation to the agency of Legh Richmond's writings; and but for Wilber-

force's "Practical View," Legh Richmond had passed through life unconverted himself, and unblessed to others.

There was nothing more remarkable in his whole history than the triumph it exhibits of the Divine Grace over natural imperfection. Most truly could he say: "By the grace of God, I am what I am." Naturally versatile—nay, by more than one of his warmest admirers his mind is spoken of as volatile—nothing short of the powerful control of the all-absorbing feeling of love, in return for the love bestowed on him, could have enabled him to persevere as he did, abounding in the work of the Lord. That he had other failings can not be doubted; that they "had not dominion over him," but were kept in subjection, is manifest by the following Memoir which displays the secret workings of his heart, and brings the reader acquainted, not only with the results, but with the struggles by which the victory was attained. This constitutes its merit. The very nature of its composition renders it irregular, and it was at one time designed to remodel it entirely. But a more attentive examination resulted in the conviction that whatever it might gain in regularity would be more than counterbalanced by the loss of that fresh, personal, autobiographic character which now constitutes its charm. Wilberforce is made to tell the story of his own life, in his own words, and nothing is introduced except where it was necessary by way of explanation, or to preserve the connection. Many of the papers which afford the material of the work he had directed should be destroyed, but was induced to permit his nearest relations to make from them such selections as they should think it advisable to publish.

1841.



# MEMOIR OF WILLIAM WILBERFORCE.

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## CHAPTER I.

"**CONTEMPORARY** with Lord Grenville and Mr. Pitt, whose intimate friend he was, and whose partisan for a time, appeared a man, in some respects greater than either ; one who, among the greatest benefactors of the human race, holds an exalted station ; one whose genius was elevated by his virtues and exalted by his piety. It is, unfortunately, hardly necessary to name one whom the vices and follies of the age have already particularized by making it impossible that what has been said could apply to any but Wilberforce." Such is the testimony of Lord Brougham to the character of the subject of our memoir. A close observer of men, thoroughly informed as to the public, private, and personal character of the subject of his eulogy, neither professing the same religious views nor belonging to the same political party, it is that of a judge neither partial nor incompetent, and with such testimony in his favor, we may well claim for the subject of our memoir the position of one worthy to be presented, not for the admiration but the imitation of all.



The disposition to trace his lineage through a distinguished ancestry is inherent in man in all his varied social positions. The influence of education or peculiar bias of mental constitution may be discovered in this as in other modes of mental action. One may glory in an ancestry distinguished for martial fame, another may rest satisfied with eminence in the peaceful pursuits of professional or mercantile life; while others still may be found who even glory in their fathers' shame from their eminence in crime. Nor is this a feeling to be condemned. Kindred to that which incites to a pure and lofty course in order to transmit an unsullied reputation to succeeding generations, though far inferior to the Christian principle of doing all to the glory of God, it still operates where the higher law is unrecognized as a check upon evil passions and an incentive to high attainments.

Those who value that honor which cometh from God only, have the same instinct expressing itself in the feeling displayed in the exquisite language of the Christian poet, who though entitled to claim for himself the honor of being "*Editus atavis regibus*," passed it by for the loftier as well as holier view,

"I boast not that I draw my birth,  
From loins enthroned and monarchs of the earth;  
But higher far my proud pretensions rise,  
The child of parents passed into the skies."

The sons of William Wilberforce trace his descent from a Norman ancestry of distinction and large possessions, while his father was a highly respectable and wealthy merchant of Hull, a town on the German Ocean, which has large commercial connections with the Baltic Sea.

William Wilberforce was born at Hull the 24th of November, 1759. He was a feeble child, of small stature, and suffered from his infancy with weak eyes. This fact is exhibited in his own characteristic manner by the enumeration, among other causes of gratitude, "that I was not born in less civilized times, when it would have been thought impossible to rear so delicate a child." He was the only son, and of three sisters one alone reached maturity. But though his physical constitution was thus delicate, his mental and moral organization were of that high order which gave, from his earliest years, a strong earnest of his future greatness. The same affectionate feeling and thoughtful care for the comfort of others, which was characteristic of his after-life, was exhibited in his earliest childhood. "I shall never forget," says a frequent guest at his mother's, "how he would steal into my sick-room, taking off his shoes, lest he should disturb me, and with an anxious face look through my curtains to learn if I was better." At the early age of seven years, he was sent to the grammar-school at Hull; and Isaac Milner, whose brother Joseph was appointed head-master of this school through the influence of the father of Wilberforce, reports his elocution to have been so remarkable, that they "used to set him upon a table and make him read aloud as an example to the other boys." The death of his father, which occurred when William was nine years old, interrupted his home training, and caused him to be placed under influences which produced the most important results in his subsequent career. The sister of John Thornton, the eminent Christian merchant of London, and friend of Cowper, Hannah More, and the Rev. John Newton, and in common with them the earnest recipient of those clear evan-

gelical doctrines, which are so eminently characteristic of the Liturgy and Articles of the Church of England, was married to his uncle William Wilberforce, who resided at St. James's Park in London, having also a country villa at Wimbledon.

To the care of this uncle was confided the boyhood of the future philanthropist and statesman. He was placed by him as a parlor boarder at a school of an inferior grade as a place of education, such as was then thought appropriate to the sons of merchants. Wilberforce himself has recorded: "Mr. Chalmers, the master, himself a Scotchman, had an usher of the same nation, whose red beard—for he scarcely shaved once a month—I shall never forget. They taught writing, French, arithmetic, and Latin—with Greek we did not much meddle. It was frequented chiefly by the sons of merchants, and they taught therefore every thing and nothing. Here I continued some time as a parlor boarder: I was sent at first amongst the lodgers, and I can remember even now the nauseous food with which we were supplied, and which I could not eat without sickness." He remained at this school two years, spending his holidays sometimes with his uncle and aunt Wilberforce, at others with Mr. Smith, of Nottingham, (father of Lord Carrington,) who had married Miss Bird, the sister of his mother, and occasionally with his mother at Hull. It being the chief object of this memoir to exhibit the religious character of Wilberforce, this being the fountain from which issued those streams which diffused life and joy so abundantly as they flowed through the varied scenes of his subsequent action, we shall at once pass in review the circumstances under which that peculiar phase of his character was developed. Of his mother, he has himself recorded, that

at the time to which we now refer, she was a Christian of the "Tillotson school." Of the religious character of his uncle we have no means of judging. His aunt held the same views as her brother, and was in the habit of attending on the ministry of Whitfield and Newton, and maintained a familiar intercourse with leading persons of similar views and tastes. Affectionate and confiding, the susceptible mind of the boy yielded to these influences; or, to speak more in consonance with his own views, and more conformably to the dictates of God's word, it was thus that in the plans of that infinite Wisdom which directs and controls all events, personal as well as national, individual as surely as general, the future statesman, philanthropist, and Christian writer was placed by divine appointment in a position where the good seed of truth was sown under the direction and influence of the Holy Ghost. To the divine principle then and there implanted, quietly dormant as it lay beneath the surface during the sixteen following years of life, we must trace all the rich glories of the future harvest, whether gathered in the one or the other sphere of action in which he so faithfully and earnestly labored. He has himself recorded this view of the divine government in the following note in his diary, when reviewing his life in the year 1831. He says, with reference to his removal from this influence: "How eventful a life has been mine; and how visibly can I trace the hand of God leading me in ways which I knew not. I think I have never before remarked that my mother's taking me from my uncle's when twelve or thirteen, and then completely a Methodist, has probably been the means of my being connected with political men, and becoming useful in life. If I had staid with my uncle, I should probably have been

a bigoted and despised Methodist. Yet to come to what I am through so many years of folly as those which elapsed between my last year at school and 1785 is wonderful. Oh! the depths of the counsels of God! What cause have I for gratitude and humiliation." The rare and pleasing character of this early piety was such as to attract the attention of the artist to whom he sat for a portrait in his twelfth year, and was noticed by that gentleman at the time in his journal. It moreover created alarm among his friends at Hull, and caused them to remove him from a position in which he appears to have been very happy; as he ever after retained a grateful recollection of the kindness he there received.

One incident he recorded, as having been productive of a permanent influence on his character. Travelling with his aunt and Mr. John Thornton, this gentleman, with his characteristic liberality and Christian wisdom, presented him with a larger sum than it was usual to bestow on children of his age, with the suggestion to remember the poor. When removed from London and these blessed influences, he was put to school at Pocklington, spending his holidays at Nottingham, with his uncle Smith, or with his mother at Hull. Great pains were taken to counteract the influence of the impression which had been made by the Spirit of God upon his heart, but happily with a result which was only temporary, and which was over-ruled by the providence of God, to the accomplishment of still greater good than could have resulted if he had not been introduced into the position of worldly distinction to which he attained. To this he refers in the extract from the review of his life in his thirty-eighth year, already given. At a subsequent period, a pack

age of letters which he had written while at Pocklington school, before this influence had been obliterated, was sent to him, of which he says: "Too much in the style of the religious letters of the day, and (astonishing!) asking my leave to publish them. As I can not doubt my having expressed the sentiments and feelings of my heart, I am strongly impressed with a sense of the dreadful effect of the efforts afterwards used, but too successfully, to wean me from all religion, and to cherish the love of pleasure and the love of glory in the opening bud of youth." His sons remark: "At twelve years old he returned to his mother's house, where it became the object of his friends, by the seductions of gayety and self-indulgence to charm away that serious spirit which had taken possession of his youthful bosom—

*Et sanctos restringere fontibus ignes.*

"The habits of society in Hull assisted their design. In a manuscript memorandum he mentions: 'It was then as gay a place as could be found out of London. The theatre, balls, great suppers, and card-parties, were the delight of the principal families in the town. The usual dinner hour was two o'clock, and at six they met at sumptuous suppers. This mode of life was at first distressing to me, but by degrees I acquired a relish for it, and became as thoughtless as the rest. As grandson to one of the principal inhabitants, I was everywhere invited and caressed: my voice and love of music made me still more acceptable. The religious impressions which I had gained at Wimbledon continued for a considerable time after my return to Hull, but my friends spared no pains to stifle them. I might almost say,

that no pious parent ever labored more to impress a beloved child with sentiments of piety, than they did to give me a taste for the world and its diversions.' The strength of principle they had to overcome was indeed remarkable. 'When first taken to a play, it was almost,' he says, 'by force.' At length, however, they succeeded; and the allurements of worldly pleasure led his youth away from all serious thought. At home there was nothing but gayety and amusement; at school there was little diligence or restraint. His talents for general society, with his rare skill in singing, rendered him everywhere an acceptable guest, and his time was wasted in a round of visits to the neighboring gentry."

At Pocklington school, as well as while with his family at Hull, he led a life of idleness, and pursued his own pleasure, yet even then manifested the possession of mental powers and moral feelings which rose superior to the circumstances by which he was surrounded. He cultivated a literary taste, and greatly excelled all the other boys in composition, though, such was his facility of expression, that he did not devote much time or labor to their preparation. His delight in English poetry was great, and he stored his memory with rich treasures from that mine of intellectual pleasure. Beattie's *Minstrel*, of which Southey remarks, "No poem has ever given more delight to minds of a certain class, and at a certain stage of their progress, that class a high one, and that stage, perhaps the most delightful of their pilgrimage," was his great favorite at that period, and he committed it to memory in his walks. To this period also belongs the putting forth of the first bud of effort in the great cause, with which his name is identified, and which continued ever to maintain the

foremost place in his efforts, and to occupy the largest share of his thoughts and purposes, until he saw the full accomplishment of his wishes in the Act of Emancipation of all slaves in the British West-Indies, just as he was passing away; the news of which cheered his latest moments, and called forth the characteristic expression of his gratitude to God, "that he should have lived to witness a day in which England was willing to give twenty millions sterling for the abolition of slavery." A fellow-pupil in the school at Pocklington, who boarded in the village, while Wilberforce was restricted within the limits of the school premises, records that "one day he gave me a letter to put into the post-office, addressed to the editor of the York paper, which he told me was in condemnation of the odious traffic in human flesh." We thus find, that though from the high point to which he attained, and measuring himself by the lofty standard of divine requirement, he looked back upon his youth as wasted, and condemned himself as not only an unprofitable but as an idle servant, he was, even at the time when all the efforts of those who should have guided him in paths of righteousness, were directed to attempts to allure him into the ways of folly, so far from falling into habits of licentiousness, that by those who judge only by the low standard of human wisdom, he would be esteemed worthy of all approbation. Such were the habits and feelings of the boy, so far as any traces of his boyhood have survived, and as we follow the current of life onward, we shall find the same character still displayed up to the period at which he was led by the Spirit of God still striving with him, to dedicate his entire powers to the service of his Creator and Redeemer.

"From the giddy and worldly circles of Hull and



the indulgence and idleness of Pocklington school," he went to the University of Cambridge, where he was entered as a student of St. John's College, at the age of seventeen. Notwithstanding his wasted time at school, he came to the University a "fair scholar," and was at once exposed to all those temptations which prove the character, and are either the rocks on which the man is wrecked forever, or the mere oppositions which develop the power of resistance, and thus are rendered subservient to the increase of strength. Left by the death of his grandfather and uncle, the heir of a large estate, and under the sole guardianship of his mother, there was no earthly control over his pursuits.

We have no minute detail of the course of his college life, but must rely on mere notes of his own recollections and those of his friends and associates, which afford us glimpses, indistinct it is true, but sufficiently clear to enable us to fix his position at this period as that of a young man in the heyday of life seeking his enjoyment in the gratification of the tastes and pleasures of youth, and living "without God in the world." He says himself that the efforts to wean him from the influences he had been brought under during his short residence in London, had been but too successful; so that he abhorred the principles and loathed the associations he had then enjoyed, and of which he afterward became the unwearied advocate, and which he so remarkably adorned during his long life. Yet even here he was an illustrious instance of that unseen, unrecognized, (shall we say unfelt?) restraining power by which God, in His boundless love and mercy, acts on man, blind, ignorant, unconscious of danger and sin at the best, and sinking still lower into actual rebellion against God if aroused to reflection and volition. Uni-

versally appropriate to every child of God is the consecrated language of Addison :

"When in the slippery paths of youth,  
With heedless steps I ran,  
Thine arm, unseen, conveyed me safe,  
And led me up to man.

"Through hidden dangers, toils, and death,  
It gently cleared my way,  
And through the pleasing snares of vice,  
More to be feared than they."

Wilberforce may be presented as an illustrious example of this truth. He says of himself: "I certainly did not think and act then as I do now; but I was so far from what the world calls licentious that I was rather complimented on being better than young men in general." Lord Clarendon, who was a college companion, says: "He had never in the smallest degree a dissolute character, however short his early habits might be of that constant piety and strictness which in his happy disposition was soon perfected."

The Rev. Thomas Gisborne, one of the brightest and loveliest stars in the glorious galaxy of the Church of England, his intimate friend not only at college but through all his life, says: "There was no one at all like him for powers of entertainment. Always fond of repartee and discussion, he yet seemed entirely free from conceit and vanity."

Yet while neither the testimony of the intimate associates of his youth, nor his own rigid self-condemning scrutiny give us the least ground to suspect his entire freedom from the grosser vices of youth, he was, he says: "Introduced, on the first night of his arrival, (at College) to as licentious a set of men as can

well be conceived. They drank hard, and their conversation was even worse than their lives. I lived amongst them for some time, though I never relished their society. Often indeed I was horror-struck at their conduct, and after the first year I shook off in great measure my connection with them." But though thus preserved from falling into the pit of sensuality, he still continued a life of great gayety, and was indeed the centre of a circle in which many of the Fellows were included. "His hospitality was frank and simple," says Mr. Gisborne. "There was always a great Yorkshire pie in his rooms, and all were welcome to partake of it. My rooms and his were back to back, and often when I was raking out my fire at ten o'clock, I heard his melodious voice calling aloud to me to come and sit with him before I went to bed. It was a dangerous thing to do, for his amusing conversation was sure to keep me up so late that I was behindhand the next morning." He says himself: "The Fellows with whom I was intimate did not act toward me the part of Christians or even of honest men. Their object seemed to be to make and keep me idle. If ever I appeared studious, they would say to me: 'Why in the world should a man of your fortune trouble himself with fagging?' I was a good classic, and acquitted myself well in college examinations; but mathematics, which my mind greatly needed, I almost entirely neglected, and I was told I was too clever to require them. Whilst my companions were reading hard and attending lectures, card-parties and idle amusements consumed my time. The tutors would often say within my hearing, that they were mere *saps*, but I did all by talent. This was poison to a mind constituted like mine." This life of idleness at college was exchanged during vacation for one

of a similar character at Hull, where the spirit that sought to extirpate the piety of the boy would encourage the folly of the young man. "Diligently," say his sons, "did he strive in after-life to supply the omissions of his youth, but to the end of life he ceased not to deplore a certain irregularity of mind, which he traced to the neglect of early discipline; and he remonstrated with the tutor to whose charge he had been confided, on the guilt of suffering those of whom he was in some sort the guardian, to inflict upon themselves so irreparable an injury. Not only had he now abandoned the views of religious truth he had imbibed in his boyish days, but it would appear that he had admitted some opinions which conflicted with the doctrines of the Church of England. What was the nature and what the degree of these opinions, we are not informed; but they were sufficient to induce him to refuse the subscription to the Articles of the Church, which is a necessary pre-requisite to the taking of a degree in the English Universities. Sad indeed, says the heavenly-minded Cowper, that we are compelled to give most praise to those honest in unbelief. Yet the example of many others confirms that now before us; proving that it is safer to be honest in that than false in the profession of the truth. Subsequent consideration of the question brought about a change of opinion long before the great change of heart, which brought him humbly to the cross of Jesus, set forth in those Articles as the alone ground of our hope; and we find that he proceeded to his degree as A.B. in 1781, when about twenty-two years of age, and as A.M. in 1788.

## CHAPTER II.

WE have thus brought him through the vestibule of life, to the threshold of the arena on which he was to perform his part.

The best evidence that, however unmindful of the great purpose for which he was called into existence, and destitute of the influence of those high motives by which he was afterward impelled he was at least a man conscious of being endowed with power of usefulness, and aspiring to the performance of an active part in the drama of life, is found in the fact, that he entered upon his career with a definite object in view. The possessor of an unencumbered estate, yielding him an income of not less than \$50,000 per annum, instead of merely looking around him for the course of life which should afford him the most voluptuous enjoyment, with the least expenditure of personal effort, he at once, though not yet arrived at majority, determined to enter on public life, and chose as the point from which to start, the representation of his native town in the national Parliament. This purpose was nearly disappointed by a dissolution of the Parliament then sitting, occurring before he reached his twenty-first year. Happily for the gratification of his ambition, more happily for the interests of humanity, it dragged along until he reached the age which rendered him eligible,

while he was engaged actively in the canvass of the voters of Hull, some of whom resided in London. These he entertained at the taverns of Wapping, where he trained himself to public speaking, in his addresses to them ; and, on the dissolution of Parliament, returned at once to Hull, where his twenty-first birth-day was celebrated with rejoicings, among one demonstration of which was the roasting of an ox in one of his fields. The election followed within a few weeks, and he was returned after a sharp contest, in which the wealth and interest of the most powerful and noble families of the county, as well as that of the administration, were arrayed against him. The expenses of this election were considerable: not less than eight or ten thousand pounds. Long habit had rendered the practice of buying and selling votes so familiar, that, in public opinion, it had lost the infamy which should ever be attached to it. Much of the expense in this case, however, was incurred in bringing to the polls the freeholders of Hull, who resided in London, at almost the opposite end of the kingdom. The result of this election was highly important. During the canvass he was trained in the art of public speaking, and was introduced into association with public men, already in the House of Commons, and thus the way was opened for his success, when he soon after became a candidate for the more important post of representative of the county of York, which at that time contained one tenth of the entire population of England. During the time that he was engaged in soliciting the votes of the freemen of Hull, who resided in London, he frequented the gallery of the House of Commons, thus making himself familiar with the business of the house, and the manner in which it was conducted, and forming at the same time the ac-

quaintance of public men. It was here that a friendship with Mr. Pitt, begun while at college, was renewed. The mere acquaintance now ripened into intimacy, and was ultimately matured into a union of feeling which resisted the shocks of diversity of opinion, and antagonism of action, and endured to the close of the mortal career of that lofty patriot and enlightened statesman. If the dissipation and irreligion of Hull and Pocklington had been trying to the virtue of his boyhood, the licentiousness and gayety of Cambridge to that of his youth, not less seductive and dangerous to that of his opening manhood were the circumstances in which he was placed, and the society to which he was introduced when he came up to London as member for his native town. He was at once elected a member of all the leading clubs. "When I went up to Cambridge," he has said, speaking of the risks to which he was then exposed, "I was scarcely acquainted with a single person above the rank of a country gentleman; and even when I left the University, so little did I know of general society, that I came up to London stored with arguments to prove the authenticity of Rowley's Poems; and now I was at once immersed in politics and fashion. The very first time I went to Boodle's I won twenty-five guineas of the Duke of Norfolk. I belonged at this time to five clubs—Miles and Evans's, Brookes's, Boodle's, White's, Goostree's. The first time I was at Brookes's, scarcely knowing any one, I joined, from mere shyness, in play at the faro table, where George Selwyn kept bank. A friend who knew my inexperience, and regarded me as a victim decked out for sacrifice, called to me: 'What! Wilberforce, is that you?' Selwyn quite resented the interference, and turning to him, said in the most expressive tone: 'O sir! don't interrupt Mr. Wilberforce,

he could not be better employed.' Nothing could be more luxurious than the style of these clubs. Fox, Sheridan, Fitzpatrick, and all your leading men, frequented them, and associated upon the easiest terms; you chatted, played at cards, or gambled as you pleased." Though he visited occasionally these various clubs, his usual resort was with a choicer and more intimate society, who assembled first in the house since occupied by Scrope and Morland's Bank, in Pall Mall, and afterwards on the premises of a man named Goostree, now the Shakspeare Gallery.

They were about twenty-five in number, and for the most part were young men who had passed together through the University, and whom the general election of 1780 had brought at the same time into public life. Pitt was an habitual frequenter of the club at Goostree's, supping there every night during the winter of 1780-81. Here their intimacy increased every day. "He was the wittiest man I ever knew, and, what was quite peculiar to himself, had at all times his wit under entire control. Others appeared struck by the unwonted association of brilliant images; but every possible combination of ideas seemed always present to his mind, and he could at once produce whatever he desired. I was one of those who met to spend an evening in memory of Shakspeare, at the Boar's Head, East Cheap. Many professed wits were present, but Pitt was the most amusing of the party, and the readiest and most apt in the required allusions. He entered with the same energy into all our different amusements; we played a good deal at Goosetree's, and I well remember the intense earnestness which he displayed when joining in those games of chance. He perceived



their increasing fascination, and soon after suddenly abandoned them forever."

It was by this vice that he was himself most nearly ensnared. A brief diary of this period records more than once the loss of £100 at the faro table. He was weaned from it in a most characteristic manner. "We can have no play to-night," complained some of the party at the club, "for St. Andrew is not here to keep bank." "Wilberforce," said Mr. Bankes, (who never joined himself,) "if you will keep it I will give you a guinea." The playful challenge was accepted, but as the game grew deep, he rose the winner of £800. Much of this was lost by those who were only heirs to future fortunes, and could not therefore meet such a call without inconvenience. The pain he felt at their annoyance cured him of a taste which seemed but too likely to become predominant.

To every lover of our own country and her institutions, however little susceptible to the higher influences of morality, and that religion which lies at the foundation of all true morality, it must be cause of deep regret that institutions, which, even in the more corrupt soil in which they originally sprang into existence, have proved to be productive of more evil influence than can be compensated by any amount of good, should have been transplanted to our cities. The dissociation of the sexes—in the hour when the plastic character of each is susceptible to the moulding influence of the other, thus disarranging the plans and defeating the purposes of Him who, knowing our organization, mental and physical, created the sexes for companionship—is an irremediable evil. The segar, the wine-bottle, the card-table, the billiard-cue, are but unlovely substitutes for those kindling influences which shine forth from beam-

ing eyes, and solace the soul through ears entranced by sweet sounds and thrilling words. Nor does the evil terminate here. There is no need to resort to the pages of romance for evidence of the cruelly demoralizing influence exerted by these associations on that relation of life which was designed by God as the sphere of the highest earthly enjoyment, and has been chosen by divine Wisdom as the illustration of the relations between the Redeemer and His people. Sorrowing wives and neglected children send up a ceaseless cry in testimony against arrangements which leave them a prey to anxiety and running to ruin for want of a father's care; while he whose happiness should be that so justly apostrophised as the "only bliss of Paradise which has survived the fall," seeks his pleasure apart from those he has sworn to cherish, and is solemnly bound to train up for the service of God and usefulness in the world. Happy for the youth of our country, and the country itself, if the warning voice of one of her gifted statesmen may be heard and listened to in all her borders,\* and clubs and club-houses cease to be the resort of the young who constitute her hope.

In spite of his life of gayety, Mr. Wilberforce attended closely to the House of Commons. He was esteemed a more active member of Parliament than any of his predecessors. From the first he was an independent man. He had entered Parliament as the opponent of the war with America, and of Lord North's administration; yet to this ministry he gave his first vote.

His first speech in Parliament was not delivered until the following May, when he presented a petition from his constituents against the Revenue Laws, and took

\* Rives' Lecture before Young Men's Christian Association, Richmond, 1855.

the opportunity to express, in strong terms, his own views of their unequal and oppressive character. It was not that he had been inattentive to business, nor that he was deficient in power of expression. He was never absent from his place, and such was the fluency with which he at this time delivered his opinions that it provoked the bitterest sarcasm of Cobbet. His remark later in life on this subject was, that he never went out of his way to speak. "I make myself well acquainted with the business, and then if the debate pass my door I step out and join it."

His fondness for the country was very great, and as there was no suitable residence on any part of his landed estates in Yorkshire, while a single man he preferred selecting his resort, during the periods when the recess of Parliament should leave him at liberty to abandon London, as the convenience or taste of the special occasion should dictate. The summer of 1752 was spent at Rayrigg, amid the lake and mountain scenery of Westmoreland, where he rented a house to which he resorted occasionally for seven years, carrying with him a passion for the beauties of scenery and retirement of the country so strong and unquenchable that, even in later life, he says: "I could scarcely leave the country for a town campaign, without being affected to tears." So soon as the recess of Parliament set him at liberty, he betook himself to the banks of the Windermere, not for mere idle, luxurious indulgence, but loaded with books, "classics, statutes at large, and history," thus making diligent preparation for greater usefulness in the sphere of life he had selected. Such, at least, was his purpose; and if it was frustrated, such is but the common sad experience of those who, trusting in native strength, seek not that superior power which

enables the child of God to rise victorious in the conflict, and which, at a subsequent period of his career, enabled him to resist the seductive influences of society. Of the first summer he says, boating and riding, and parties, either at his own house or a neighbor's, filled up the months till his return to London, and the earnest, active performance of his duties as M.P. His intimacy with Mr. Pitt, together with the influence of his large fortune, brought him into close association and connection with the leading movements in the highest political circles, of which the entries made in his diary at this time furnish abundant evidence. He was himself among the supporters of Mr. Pitt; yet not, even in the early warmth of their friendship, could his principles, though as yet without that high tone they ultimately assumed, be warped to the support of measures he disapproved. Thus we find him recording the great reluctance with which he voted against Pitt the second time he spoke in the House of Commons. When about this period Pitt, then but little more than twenty-one years of age, was elevated by George III. to the lofty position of Prime Minister, uninfluenced by the seductions of ambition, as well as by the feeling of personal friendship, Wilberforce still refused to part with his independence; and among the surest tokens of the pure principles of the minister himself is the fact, that the closest intimacy suffered little or no interruption on this account; and we find the friends start for Brighton to spend the Easter holidays together; and driven from thence by inclement weather, crossed the island together to Bath. The death of his uncle had placed his villa at Wimbledon in possession of Wilberforce, and thus enabled him to gratify his own fondness for the country, and to welcome his friend to a participation in

this enjoyment, even during the session of Parliament. And here Pitt, to whom it was a luxury even to sleep in country air, not unfrequently took up his residence, riding down late at night, and occupying his rooms, even if the master of the house was not at home. He resided there four months in one spring, and repaired thither when, on the resignation of office, he was compelled to abandon the official residence in Downing street, which he thus announced to his friend: "Elliot, Arden, and I will be with you before curfew, and expect an early meal of peas and strawberries. Banks, I suppose, will not sleep out of Duke street, but he has not yet appeared in the

" House of Commons,

" Half-past four."

A very charming insight into the pleasures of his life here, and the genial cheerful amusements, is afforded by the dottings of his diary at this time, which are, however, too indistinct, and too much connected with the personalities of life, for production here.

His sons remark: "This was the most critical period of his course. He had entered in his earliest manhood upon the dissipated scenes of fashionable life, with a large fortune and most acceptable manners. His ready wit, his conversation continually sparkling with polished raillery and courteous repartee, his chastened liveliness, his generous and kindly feelings; all secured him that hazardous applause with which society rewards its ornaments and victims. His rare accomplishment in singing tended to increase his danger. 'Wilberforce, we must have you again; the Prince says he will come at any time to hear you sing,' was the flattery which he received after his first meeting with the Prince of Wales, in 1782, at the luxurious soirées of Devonshire House.

“He was an admirable mimic, and until reclaimed by the kind severity of the old Lord Camden, would often set the table in a roar by his perfect imitation of Lord North. His affection for Lord Camden was an intimation, at this very time, of the higher texture of his mind. Often would he steal away from the merri-ment and light amusements of the gayer circle, to gather wisdom from the weighty words and chosen anecdotes in which the veteran Chancellor abounded. His affection was warmly returned by Lord Camden, who loved the cheerful earnestness with which he sought for knowledge. ‘Lord Camden noticed me particularly,’ he said, ‘and treated me with great kindness. Amongst other things, he cured me of the dangerous art of mimicry. When invited by my friends to witness my powers of imitation, he at once refused, saying slightly for me to hear it: ‘It is but a vulgar accomplishment.’ ‘Yes, but it is not imitating the mere manner; Wilberforce says the very thing Lord North would say.’ ‘Oh!’ was his reply, ‘every one does that.’ This friendly intercourse was long continued. ‘How many subjects of politics and religion,’ writes the old lord with a pressing invitation to Camden Place, in 1787, ‘might we not have settled by this time, in the long evenings.’

“But if he escaped the seductions of frivolity and fashion, he was in equal danger from the loftier temptations of ambition. With talents of the highest order, and eloquence surpassed by few, he entered upon public life possessed of the best personal connections, in his intimate friendship with Mr. Pitt. Disinterested, generous, lively, fond of society, by which he was equally beloved, and overflowing with affection towards

his numerous friends, he was indeed in little danger from the low and mercenary spirit of worldly policy. But ambition has inducements for men of every temper; and how far he was then safe from its fascinations, may be learned from the conduct of his brother 'Independents.' They were a club of about forty members of the House of Commons, most of them opponents of the Coalition Ministry, whose principle of union was a resolution to take neither place, pension, nor peerage. Yet in a few years so far had the fierceness of their independence yielded to various temptations, that he and Mr. Bankes alone of all the party retained their early simplicity of station. He himself was the only county member who was not raised to the peerage. He too would no doubt have been entangled in the toils of party, and have failed of those great triumphs he afterwards achieved, but for the entrance into his soul of higher principles. His later journals abound in expressions of thankfulness that he did not at this time enter on official life, and waste his days in the trappings of greatness. Though he was practically thoughtless, ambition had not hardened his heart or destroyed the simplicity of his tastes."

The following letter to his sister will afford confirmation of this view of his character at this period. To none but an earnest man could a sister have expressed herself as she would appear to have done, as though jealous of the concentration of his thoughts and attention on the duties of his station as a legislator. Nor could we desire for a young man in his position a higher exhibition of virtuous principle than is here exhibited, unless he assume the lofty standard of Christian duty to a redeeming Lord.

“ WIMBLEDON, *June 5, 1788.*

“ MY DEAR SISTER : From my retirement at Wimbledon, I write to you in your retirement at Drinkston, and I wish you may find as much comfort in the one as I do in the other. The existence I enjoy here is of a sort quite different from what it is in London. I feel a load off my mind ; nor is it in the mighty powers of Mrs. Siddons, nor in the yet superior and more exalted gratifications of the House of Commons, which you seem to think my summum bonum, to compensate to me for the loss of good air, pleasant walks, and what Milton calls ‘ each rural sight, each rural sound.’ This you will say is a bigoted attachment ; and so perhaps it may be ; yet it is an attachment which I strive rather to strengthen than diminish ; for, not to observe that it is a natural one, I am sure that I derive from it the most solid and substantial advantages. If my moral and religious principles be such as in these days are not very generally prevalent, perhaps I owe the continuance of them in a great measure to solitude in the country. This is not merely the difference between theory and practice, it is not merely (though that be something) that one finds oneself very well able to resist temptations to vice, when one is out of the way of being exposed to them ; but in towns there is no leisure for thought or serious reflection, and we are apt to do that with regard to moral conduct, which we are in vain advised to do in the case of misfortunes—to look only on those who are worse than ourselves, till we flatter ourselves into a favorable opinion of our modes of life, and exalted ideas of our own virtue. But in the country a little reading or reflection presents us with a more complete and finished model, and we become sensible of our own imperfections ; need I add that trite maxim, which,



however, I will, for it is a true one, that humility is the surest guide both to virtue and wisdom. Besides, custom and habit operate almost as powerfully on our opinions and judgments as on our carriage and deportment ; and lest we become thoroughly tainted with the fashionable ways of thinking and acting, we should retire to converse and keep company a little with our faithful mentor, who will give us good advice, if we will but have the prudence and the spirit to attend to it. For my own part, I never leave this poor villa without feeling my virtuous affections confirmed and strengthened : and I am afraid it would be in some degree true if I were to add, that I never remain long in London without their being somewhat injured and diminished. After this eulogium on the country and solitude, you will tell me it is an odd reason I am about to give for having almost laid aside my intention of going abroad, that I can not find any friend to travel with me ; but really the idea is so uncomfortable, of spending three or four weeks alone in a post-chaise, and of not being able to join in the conversation, when one does at last see the human face divine, that it staggers the resolution to which I had come of *taking a tower* ; and my inclination is seconded by my reason, which suggests to me that I can pass my summer to much better advantage in England. Should the latter be my lot, and this word I take to be the properest that can be used on the occasion, for it is a good deal a matter of chance, I shall be on the ramble, and endeavor in some of my excursions to show myself not wholly without bowels, and to stumble on you. But of all this I shall be better able to speak in about three weeks, when I expect Parliament will rise, and you must not then be surprised

to receive a letter from me dated from any place in or out of his Majesty's dominions."

When set at liberty again by the close of the session, we find him acting in consonance with these views, and seeking recreation with friends in the country, Mr. Pitt among them, with whom and Mr. Eliot he soon after crossed the Channel on a visit to France. The diary kept by him furnishes some amusing incidents, and curt as are its notices, proves him to have possessed the power of estimating character in no ordinary degree.

On the 11th of September the three friends met at Canterbury, and on the following day embarking at Dover, in spite of a heavy sea, crossed to Calais. Thence they proceeded straight to Rheims, to gain some knowledge of the language before they went to Paris. Each had trusted to the other to obtain the needful introductions; and when at last the omission was discovered, they had only time to write to Mr. Robert Smith for letters. He had no better resource than to obtain from Peter Thellusson an introduction to the correspondent of his house. With these credentials they arrived at Rheims, then under that episcopal government which had lasted from the time of Clovis and to which may be traced, according to Guizot, the origin of European civilization. At the the time of their arrival the Archbishop (Perigord) was absent, and the ordinary routine of government devolved upon Mons. De Legeard, as secretary to the conseil d'état. Their first adventures are thus related in a letter to Mr. Banks: "From Calais we made directly for Rheims, and the day after our arrival dressed ourselves unusually well, and proceeded to the house of Mons. Coustier to present, with not a little awe, our only letters of recommendation. It was with some surprise

that we found Mons. Coustier behind a counter distributing figs and raisins. I had heard that it was very usual for gentlemen on the Continent to practise some handicraft trade or other for their amusement, and therefore for my own part I concluded that his taste was in the fig way, and that he was only playing at grocer for his diversion; and viewing the matter in this light, I could not help admiring the excellence of his imitation; but we soon found that Mons. Coustier was a 'véritable epicier,' and that not a very eminent one. He was very fair and candid, however, and acknowledged to us that he was not acquainted with any of the gentry of the place, and therefore could not introduce us to them. We returned to our inn, and after spending nine or ten days without making any great progress in the French language, which could not indeed be expected from us, as we spoke to no human being but each other, and our Irish courier, when we began to entertain serious thoughts of leaving the place in despair, by way of a parting effort we waited on our epicier, and prevailed on him to put on a bag and sword and carry us to the intendant of the police, whom he supplied with groceries. The scheme succeeded admirably. The intendant was extremely civil to us, and introduced us to the Archbishop, who gave us two very good and pleasant dinners, and would have had us stay a week with him. (N. B.—Archbishops in England are not like *Archivêques* in France; these last are jolly fellows of about forty years of age, who play at billiards, etc., like other people.)

"We soon got acquainted with as many of the inhabitants as we could wish, especially an Abbé de La-geard, a fellow of infinite humor, and of such extraordinary humanity, that to prevent our time hanging

heavy on our hands, he would sometimes make us visits of five or six hours at a stretch. Our last week passed very pleasantly, and for myself I was really very sorry when the day arrived for our setting off for Paris."

The Abbé De Lageard (afterward Mons. de Chervel) has furnished some recollections of this visit. "One morning when the intendant of police brought me his daily report, he informed me, there are three Englishmen here of very suspicious character. They are in a wretched lodging, they have no attendance, yet their courier says that they are 'grands seigneurs,' and that one of them is the son of the great Chatham; but it is impossible, they must be 'des intrigants.' I had been in England, and knew that the younger sons of your noble families are not always wealthy, and I said to Mons. Du Chatel, who wished to visit them officially, and investigate their character, let us be in no hurry, it may be perhaps as they represent, I will inquire about them myself. I went to their lodgings the same evening and got their names from the courier, and true enough they were said to be Mr. W. Pitt, Mr. Wilberforce, and Mr. Eliot, all three members of the British Parliament, and one of them lately a leading member of the government. The next morning I visited them, and as I was at once satisfied by their appearance, I asked whether I could be of any use to them, and offered whatever the town of Rheims could afford for their amusement. Amongst other things Mr. Pitt complained, 'Here we are in the middle of Champagne, and we can not get any tolerable wine.' 'Dine with me to-morrow,' I replied, 'and you shall have the best wine the country can afford.' They came and dined with me, and instead of moving direct-

ly after dinner, as we do in France, we sat talking for five or six hours."

The Abbé De Lageard, a man of family and fortune, was one of those whom the revolution stripped of every thing but their faith and loyalty; and when residing as an emigrant in England, he received from Mr. Wilberforce a willing and ample return of his present hospitality. Nothing could exceed his kindness to them: for a fortnight he was their constant attendant; he made them acquainted with the noblesse who resided in the neighborhood of Rheims; he gave them permission to sport over the domain of the Archbishop; and upon his return, introduced them to a familiar footing at the palace.

Wilberforce having come into Parliament as the opponent of the administration of Lord North and the American war, his acquaintance was cultivated by Dr. Franklin, and he was also introduced to Gen. Lafayette, then recently returned from the United States. Of his appearance, and the position he occupied at the French Court, he thus speaks: "He seemed to be the representative of the democracy in the very presence of the monarch, the tribune intruding with his veto within the chamber of the patrician order. His own establishment was formed upon the English model; and amidst the gayety and ease of Fontainebleau, he assumed an air of republican austerity. When the fine ladies of the court would attempt to drag him to the card-table, he shrugged his shoulders with an affected contempt for the customs and amusements of the old regime. Meanwhile the deference which this champion of a new state of things received, above all from the ladies of the court, intimated, clearly the disturbance of the social atmosphere, and pre-

saged the coming tempest. A special messenger recalling Mr. Pitt to London, cut short their further observations ; and after a six weeks' absence, Mr. Wilberforce returned to England on the 24th October, ' better pleased with his own country than before he left it.' ”

In a letter to Mr. Bankes, he says : “ At Paris we staid nearly a week, and from the swarms of English we should not have found out that we were out of London if it had not been for the circumstance of our going every night to a play of which we were not able to understand a syllable. But it was not to see sights that we went abroad, but to study the people ; and it was not in the power of the amusements of Paris to detain us long from Fontainebleau, where the court is spending a month of gala, and where in four days, the time of our stay, we had an opportunity of seeing as many people of distinction as we could have done in a month in Paris. Here we dined and supped with ministers, and every night we spent with the Queen, who is a woman of a most engaging manner and appearance. The King is so strange a being (of the hog kind) that it is worth going a hundred miles for the sight of him, especially boar-hunting. They all, men and women, crowded about Pitt in shoals, and he behaved with great spirit, though he was sometimes a little bored when they talked to him about parliamentary reform. They are certainly, we have every reason to say, a most obliging people, and we all returned from Fontainebleau charmed with our reception.”

These are the remarks of a young man of but twenty-three years of age, and certainly afford evidence of thoughtfulness of character and a power of deriving information from associations, which to the mere thoughtless devotee of pleasure would have presented

nothing but evil; and they indicate clearly that he had already commenced an honorable career, though even on this period he afterward looked back with a feeling of deep regret, as spent in rebellion and alienation from God.

## CHAPTER III.

SUMMONED back to parliamentary duties by a special messenger, Mr. Pitt returned, and with him his two friends. It was a period of intense political excitement. All who are familiar with the history of the great events commencing with the French Revolution, which burst forth like a volcano, pouring torrents of molten lava over the scenes of gayety and glory which our travelers had just left, know that it would be impossible to introduce here any of the allusions to the passing events with which Mr. Wilberforce's diary abounds, without expanding this work far beyond the limits which belong to it, and introducing matter which, though interesting in itself, is not appropriate to the work in hand. In all the struggles between the rival parties headed by Pitt and Fox, Wilberforce was an active participator, being fully recognized as the supporter of Pitt. The vivacity of his character, and his admirable adaptation to social pursuits, caused him to be much courted by the fashionable circles of the highest grade, and we find him entering into the pursuit of pleasure there with great zest. Mrs. Siddons on the stage, Almacks, dining and supping, divided his time and thoughts with the public business, and are all noted alike in his diary. These, however, were the mere surface bubbles. The under-



current was deep and strong, and no sooner was the call for action heard than it met with a ready response. The great county of Yorkshire had always, under the influence of its leading families, given its weight to the party to which Mr. Pitt was opposed. It was now determined to make an effort to bring about a change, and to procure the adoption of an address to the King, requesting him to dismiss the ministry, composed of a coalition of the friends of Lord North and Fox. A meeting of the freeholders was summoned to be held at York, in the castle-yard, and Mr. Wilberforce was dispatched to represent the views of Mr. Pitt's party, and to promote the carrying such an address, though the poet Mason, then a Canon Residentiary of York Cathedral, was well-nigh his only acquaintance out of his own corner of the county.

The day before that appointed for the meeting, he reached his destination, and assisted in drawing up the address to the Crown, which was to be presented to the freeholders for their adoption. The time proved most unpropitious for the purpose, as at the appointed hour the weather was cold, and it was hailing. Notwithstanding the weather, the meeting, which was held in the castle-yard, was kept together from ten until four. An address to the King condemning the coalition ministry was proposed and supported by the friends of Mr. Pitt. On the other side appeared the Duke of Norfolk, Lord Carlisle, Lord Cavendish, Lord Fitzwilliam, and many other men of rank and influence. When the proposers of the address had spoken, and the Whig lords had been heard in answer, the day was far advanced, and the listeners were growing weary of the contest. At this time Mr. Wilberforce mounted the table, from which, under a great wooden canopy before the high-

sheriff's chair, the various speakers had addressed the meeting. The weather was so bad "that it seemed," says an eye-witness, "as if his slight frame would be unable to make head against its violence." The castle-yard, too, was so crowded, that men of the greatest physical powers had been scarcely audible. Yet such was the magic of his voice and the grace of his expression, that by his very first sentence he arrested, and for above an hour he continued to enchain the attention of the surrounding multitude. "Danby tells me," writes Pepper Arden, "that you spoke like an angel. That, indeed, I hear from many others." The disadvantage under which his figure had at first appeared, from the scale and construction of the hustings, was soon forgotten in the force and animation of his manner. "I saw," said Boswell, describing the meeting to Dundas, "what seemed a mere shrimp mount upon the table; but, as I listened, he grew, and grew, until the shrimp became a whale." "It is impossible," says one who heard him, "though at the distance of so many years, to forget his speech, or the effect which it produced. He arraigned with the utmost vigor the coalition ministry, and the India Bill which they had proposed—a measure which he described as 'the offspring of that unnatural conjunction, marked with the features of both its parents, bearing token to the violence of the one, and the corruption of the other.'" "His argumentative and eloquent speech," says a York paper of the day, "was listened to with the most eager attention, and received with the loudest acclamations of applause. It was a reply to all that had been urged against the address; but there was such an excellent choice of expressions, so rapidly pronounced, that we are unable to do it justice in any account we can give of it." He was distinctly

heard to the utmost limits of the crowd, and interrupted only by an express from Mr. Pitt, which, without disconcerting him, enabled him with the greatest possible effect to announce to the assembled county, that by dissolving Parliament, the King had at that very moment appealed to the decision of the nation.

The great ability which he had thus displayed before the county, produced the most unexpected consequences. The immense expense of contesting its representation had reduced Yorkshire to the condition of a nomination borough in the hands of the Whig nobility. "To get up an opposition" at the approaching election, had been one end of Mr. Wilberforce's presence. And he himself, warned doubtless by that internal consciousness of power, by which great men are prepared for high attempts, had already secretly pre-saged the actual issue.

"I had formed within my own heart the project of standing for the county. To any one besides myself, I was aware that it must appear so mad a scheme, that I never mentioned it to Mr. Pitt, or any of my political connections. It was undoubtedly a bold idea, but I was then very ambitious. However, entertaining it, I carefully prepared myself for the public debate, which was soon to follow in the face of the whole county; and both in the public meeting, and in the subsequent discussions, it was this idea which regulated the line, as well as animated the spirit, of my exertions. All circumstances indeed considered. .my mercantile origin, my want of connection or acquaintance with any of the nobility or gentry of Yorkshire. .my being elected for that great county appears to me, upon the retrospect, so utterly improbable, that I can not but ascribe it to a providential intimation, that the idea of my obtaining

that high honor suggested itself to my imagination, and in fact fixed itself within my mind."

Whilst he was yet speaking in the castle-yard, the admiration of the freeholders burst forth in the shout: "We'll have this man for our county member;" and his conduct in the succeeding meetings suggested the same idea to independent men of greater influence.

"Mr. Wilberforce," wrote one of the company to Lord Hawke, "has gained the hearts and admiration of all that heard him speak; and when we broke up at the York Tavern, at twelve o'clock on Thursday night, there was a sudden and spontaneous cry of 'Wilberforce and liberty,' which was his first nomination for the county."

Strong as was now the feeling in his favor, it seemed a thing so incredible, that a young man, utterly unconnected with the aristocracy of the county, should actually displace their nominee, that it was not deemed safe for him to resign his present seat. On the evening therefore of the 26th, he "set off to secure his election at Hull, where" he "arrived at two o'clock in the morning."

His determination to resign the seat for Hull, if elected for Yorkshire, was of course offensive to many of his political friends in his native town; yet such was his personal popularity, that coming from York only two days after the meeting there, he at once commenced the canvass of the inhabitants for both elections, there being York voters among the residents of Hull, and on the first of April, only four days after the meeting at York, he was triumphantly elected for Hull, thus securing for him his seat in the House, in case he should be defeated at the county election. The dissatisfaction at his purposed resignation was displayed

by pelting him with snow-balls during the ceremony of chairing, by his supporters. "But when," says an eyewitness, "the procession reached his mother's house, he sprung from the chair, and presenting himself with surprising quickness at a projecting window—that of the nursery in which his childhood had been passed—he addressed the populace with such complete effect, that he was able afterward to decide the election of his successor." The same evening he was on his way back to York, canvassing the county on the way, and arriving at that city on the eighth of April, which was the "nomination day." He found a welcome greeting, and was immediately proposed as one of the candidates of the opposition party.

"The brunt of opposition," say his sons, "was of course directed against the new candidate, whom Lord Mulgrave recommended to the freeholders as 'approved already by a large part of the county, the bosom friend of the present minister, and second only to him in eloquence, unexampled at their years.' To meet the anticipated charge of such a contest, a subscription was immediately commenced, to which the candidates in vain requested leave to add £2000 a piece. Of the sum thus contributed, (£18,670,) about one fourth proved sufficient to defray the whole expense of the election.

"The result he enters thus in his diary: '7th. Up early—breakfasted tavern—rode frisky horse to castle—elected—chaired—dined York Tavern.'

"Thus was accomplished this great triumph of independent principles. Its effect upon the great struggle members have confessed to me," writes Mr. Duncombe, 'that they owed their success in their own counties to the example set by ours.' By it, and nearly two hundred

other victories over the adherents of the coalition party, Mr. Pitt became as strong in the House of Commons, as he had been hitherto in the affections of the people. 'He was then able,' says Mr. Wilberforce, 'if he had duly estimated his position, to have cast off the corrupt machinery of influence, and formed his government upon the basis of independent principle.' The issue of the Yorkshire contest might have suggested the possibility of such an effort. Its result was altogether new and unexpected. The return of a candidate who came forward upon ground which none had taken heretofore, was an intimation of that power, with which intelligence and property had now armed the middle ranks of society. As the man of the middle classes, he took his place in public life; as their representative, he was opposed alike to party influence and democratic license; as their representative, he demanded and obtained the abolition of the Slave Trade."

It would not interest readers on this side the Atlantic, to follow the course of this election struggle. We merely record the result, that he was honorably chosen in opposition to the combined efforts of the government, the older aristocracy, and the long usage of the county. The importance of the result can not be over-estimated, placing him as it did, in a position which confided to his hands greater power than was wielded by any other member of the House of Commons. How he fulfilled this trust, and met the obligations it imposed upon him, we shall endeavor to exhibit in the record of his subsequent career. That we do not over-estimate the importance of this crisis, is manifested by his own language. In a review of his life left among his voluminous MSS., he refers to this event as follows:

"That gracious Providence which all my life long has

directed my course with mercy and goodness, and which in so many instances known only to myself, has called forth my wonder and gratitude, was signally manifested in the first formation of my parliamentary connection with the county of York, and in its unintermitted and long continuance. Had the change in my religious principles taken place a year sooner, humanly speaking I never could have become member for Yorkshire. The means I took, and the exertions I made, in pursuing that object, were such as I could not have used after my religious change; I should not have thought it right to carve for myself so freely, if I may use the phrase, (to shape my course for myself so confidently,) nor should I have adopted the methods by which I ingratiated myself in the good-will of some of my chief supporters; neither after my having adopted the principles I now hold, could I have conformed to the practices by which alone any man would be elected for any of the places in which I had any natural influence or connection. . . .

“My having been member for Hull, gave me the opportunity of making myself known as a public man; it led to my formation of political connections, and to my cultivation of the art of public speaking—all of which were among the means that prepared the way for my representing the county.”

Having thus traced his progress from early childhood to the point at which he started fairly on the course of life; having been witnesses of the first planting of that divine seed which gave its peculiar features to his character, and seen how it then lay dormant and apparently lifeless, while by the control of an unfelt and unrecognized Providence, he was brought to a position for future action; it now becomes our duty to turn the

attention of the reader to that important change in his feelings and purposes, which by purifying the one and elevating the other, changed the mere slave of ambition into the free-born child of God, doing service not by constraint, but willingly; not for the base rewards which perish with the possession, but for the crown of righteousness that fadeth not away. After a hasty tour in Devonshire, he reached London upon the 14th of May, and took his seat as member of Parliament for York, in the twenty-fifth year of his age. "He now possessed," say his sons, "enough to intoxicate his mind, while prospects of gratified ambition seemed to open without limit before him." He attended constantly through the first session of Parliament, and swelled the triumphant majorities which secured the supremacy of his friend. Upon the prorogation of Parliament, he went down to the north, and presenting himself at York as "the joy of the races," spent his twenty-fifth birth-day at the top wave and highest flow of those frivolous amusements which had swallowed up so large a portion of his youth. "Yet at this very time, the providence of God was guiding him into that path which issued in his altered character."

Whilst at York, he had proposed to his friend, W. Burgh, to become his companion in a continental tour. To his great surprise the offer was declined; and being thrown soon afterwards at Scarborough, into the company of Isaac Milner, the invitation was transferred to him. His strong sense and well-furnished mind recommended him as an agreeable companion; but little could either party then imagine the gracious purpose for which this choice was ordered.

After a hasty visit to Westmoreland, and "looking again on all the old scenes with vast pleasure," he



started for the continent upon the 20th of October. One carriage was occupied by Isaac Milner and himself, whilst in another followed his mother, sister, and two female relatives. Crossing France to Lyons, they embarked upon the Rhone; and whilst dropping down its stream to Avignon, "a voyage of four days under a cloudless sky," he writes from "just in sight of Valence—

*"To Lord Muncaster, Muncaster Castle, Cumberland.*

"MY DEAR MUNCASTER: With much labor and difficulty, by trying every possible half-hour when my eyes would bear writing, I have at last completely got through the answers to all my letters of business, which were accumulating into an immense heap on my table in Bruton street, whilst I was muttering my wayward fancies on the banks of Windermere; and which, to my sore annoyance and discomfort, I have brought in my chaise into the heart of France. At last they are gone, and the devil go with them. For the first time since I have been out, I now take up my pen without reluctance, to give you a little account of my proceedings since we parted at the foot of Hardknot.

"I staid at Rayrigg a very few days, exploring every quarter, in order to select some spot for my future residence, blest with a more than common share of beauty: but though I saw several where I could be content to fix myself, if the eye alone were to be consulted in the choice, yet as long as one lives in this gross world, one must have regard to matters of a more ignoble kind, and a less refined nature. Some situations were rejected because I should be too far from Kendal market, others because of their distance from the great boat; and at last after a most accurate examination of

the whole lake, I left the country without deciding any thing, but sorely sinning against that commandment which forbids our coveting our neighbor's house; for near Brathay Bridge there is a field which is in all respects super-eminent, but which, as it is very near the house of the gentleman who lately bought the Brathay estate, I have no hopes of being able to purchase, except upon one ground, that, I mean, of the owner's being insensible to its value; a conclusion to which one is naturally led, when one recollects how *pure white* he has made the bridge; and though in all cases I now agree with Lady Muncaster, that gray is better, yet I don't know if to gain Mr. Law's consent to sell me his field, I should not be induced to promise him to make my house, stables, and every foot of building about me, as white as white can be. Well, after leaving Westmoreland, I repaired to London, and spent about ten days in that neighborhood, chiefly vibrating between Wimbledon and Brighthelmstone, and preparing for my journey into foreign parts, where I have been proceeding by slow marches ever since, with my mother, a couple of sick cousins, very good girls, whose health we hope to reëstablish by the change of air, and a most intelligent and excellent friend of mine, a tutor of a college in Cambridge, whose wig I see excites no small astonishment in the Gallic perruquiers: he has equipped himself, however, with one of a smaller size, which he is to put on when we fix. At present we are sitting in our carriage in a boat, and driving down the Rhone to Avignon. The scenes are more romantic and wonderful than any one can conceive, except an inhabitant of Cumberland; and in truth, they are so like your north country, that my thoughts would naturally recur to Eskdale, from the similarity of the surrounding ob-

jects, if they had naught else to lead them thither ; but this, my dear Muncaster, you will do me the justice to believe, is not the case ; and I assure you I have often been looking out of your window, when you have not seen me, and been endeavoring thus to live over again the pleasant days I passed with you in Cumberland. I frequently ramble in the wood, and I assure you I approve of your alteration in front, even more than I expected ; for it does still better in theory than in practice. You, I suppose, are about this time encountering a more formidable antagonist, and if you are not a better sailor than myself, who was desperately sick between Dover and Calais, though in the finest morning I ever beheld, you are sincerely to be pitied in your passage across the Irish Channel. When you get across, I hope your troubles will be over ; and it will give me pleasure to learn this from you on two grounds, both because I shall conclude your private concerns are brought to a desirable issue, and I shall hope that public matters are in a better train than when they were last the subject of our conversation. *The cœlum non animam mutant* is strictly true with respect to me ; for though I am five hundred miles from the white cliffs of Albion, yet I do not feel my anxiety diminished either for ‘the General,’\* or the other friends I have left behind me : I beg you will bear this in your mind, and satisfy me of the existence and well-being of one of them. You have no excuse, whose eyes are as stout as the rest of your carcass ; and a book on one’s knee is as good a writing-table as a plank put through the fore-window of the post-chaise. I shall direct to you at Muncaster, where if you are, I beg my best remembrances to Lady

\* Mr. Pitt.

M. and my little friends, Gamel and Penny. Believe me, dear Muncaster,

"Yours very sincerely,

"Nov. 12, 1784.

W. WILBERFORCE."

His daily journal proves him to have been an acute observer of men and manners, as well as of the various objects of interest, which presented themselves on his tour. His record of Sunday travelling, and attendance on balls, and other places of public amusement, corroborates the impression made by the casual profanity of the letter to Lord Muncaster, that, though upon the verge of the important event which gave its color and importance to his subsequent career, he was at this time wholly free from the influence of those principles, which through a long life "he adorned in all things." The party made some stay at Nice, during which one entry in his diary is as follows:

"Out at assemblies and balls frequently. Gave dinners often."

In all these scenes he was constantly accompanied by Milner, whose vivacity and sense, joined with rustic and unpolished manners, continually amused his friends. "Pretty boy, pretty boy," uttered in the broadest Yorkshire dialect, whilst he stroked familiarly his head, was the mode in which he first addressed the young Prince William of Gloucester. "Though Milner's religious principles were even now, in theory, much the same as in later life, yet they had at this time little practical effect upon his conduct. He was free from every taint of vice, but not more attentive than others to religion;" (though a clergyman, he never thought of reading prayers during their whole stay at Nice;) "he appeared in all respects like an ordi-

nary man of the world, mixing like myself in all companies, and joining as readily as others in the prevalent Sunday parties. Indeed, when I engaged him as a companion in my tour, I knew not that he had any deeper principles. The first time I discovered it, was at the public table at Scarborough. The conversation turned on Mr. Stillingfleet; and I spoke of him as a good man, but one who carried things too far. 'Not a bit too far,' said Milner; and to this opinion he adhered, when we renewed the conversation in the evening on the sands. This declaration greatly surprised me; and it was agreed that at some future time we would talk the matter over. Had I known at first what his opinions were, it would have decided me against making him the offer: so true is it that a gracious hand leads us in ways that we know not, and blesses us not only without, but even against, our plans and inclinations."

The associations of Hull, Pocklington, Cambridge, London clubs and society, had so perverted his feelings and changed his tastes, that he had forgotten the pleasures of his boyhood, and the better thoughts and feeling of Wimbledon and St. James's Park, and made him ready to condemn as extravagance and Methodism all serious attention to religious faith and doctrine, and he was in the habit of attending the meeting of Mr. Lindsey, who having been a clergyman of the Established Church, had adopted Socinian views, and, resigning his benefice, was preaching in a private chapel, and found many admirers. Mr. Wilberforce was not led by "any preference for his peculiar doctrines, for in this, except on some great festivals, his preaching differed little from that which was then common among the London clergy, but because he seemed more earnest and practical than others." Milner, on the contrary, though

deficient in practical religion, knew enough to regard it with reverence in others, and whenever his lively companion treated it with raillery, would seriously combat his objections, adding: "I am no match for you, Wilberforce, in this running fire, but if you really wish to discuss these subjects seriously, I will gladly enter on them with you." No great impression could be expected on another from reasonings which so little influenced himself; and their discussions appear to have been merely speculative up to the period of their quitting Nice, in the winter of 1784-5. Just before this journey, Mr. Wilberforce took up casually a little volume, (Doddridge's *Rise and Progress of Religion*,) which Mr. Unwin, Cowper's correspondent, had given to the mother of one amongst his fellow-travellers, and casting his eye over it hastily, asked Milner what was its character. "It is one of the best books ever written," was his answer; "let us take it with us and read it on our journey." He easily consented, and they read it carefully together, with thus much effect, that he determined at some future season to examine the Scriptures for himself, and see if things were stated there in the same manner. In this journey he was alone with Milner.\*

His diary of travel abounds in notes on men and things as they were presented, proving that while participating in the frivolities of the places to which he resorted, he was yet intent on seeking to improve his opportunities for the acquisition of knowledge. The duties of his position summoned him back to London. To these calls of duty he ever responded. In a review of his life, he says: "No man, I believe, was ever more punctual in his attendance on the House of Commons than

myself. I was always in my place on the first day of the session, and I do not remember having ever been absent on the last, excepting once, when I was driven into the country a day or two before the prorogation by the illness of some of my family." In conformity with these principles, he now left his family at Nice, and returned to support the measures of parliamentary reform introduced by Pitt. The journey across France at that time and season of the year, was not accomplished without risk. Leaving summer temperature at Nice late in January, they travelled eighteen days through snow as they advanced to the north. Once upon the hills of Burgundy, as they climbed upon a frozen road, the weight of the carriage overpowered the horses, and it was just running over a frightful precipice when Milner, who was walking behind, perceived the danger, and by a sudden effort of his great muscular strength, arrested its descent. Having reached London in time to participate in the debate and to be placed on some of the committees of the House, he attended constantly in his place, though still living in an unceasing round of company and amusement; dining twice or three times a week with Mr. Pitt, joining in the festivities in which Dundas (afterwards Lord Melville) delighted, at Wimbledon and Richmond, whilst "sitting up all night singing—shirked Duchess of Gordon at Almacks—danced till five in the morning," are fair samples of the common occupation of his time. Yet still as he selected Mr. Lindsey's preaching on account of its serious and practical character, so there appear from time to time among his memoranda, notes which indicate a tone of deeper feeling. Thus "dined Hamiltons—christening—very indecent—all laughing

round." "S. and I talked—strange that the most generous men, and religious, do not see that their duties increase with their fortune, and that they will be punished for spending it in eating, etc. Opera—shocking dance of Festin de Pierre, and unmoved audience." The session of Parliament was prolonged, so that his mother and sister were compelled, by the heat, to leave Provence before he could absent himself from his duties in London; and it was not until July, that Wilberforce, again accompanied by Milner, found them at Geneva, and resumed their travels, intending to spend the summer in Switzerland. Milner and he were together in one carriage, and at his suggestion they resumed their conversations on religious topics, read together the Greek Testament, and carefully examined the doctrines which it teaches. From Geneva they passed on to Berne, from whence he wrote playfully to his friend Lord Muncaster, in Cumberland.

*To Lord Muncaster.*

"BERNE, 14th Aug., 1785.

"DEAR MUNCASTER: That a man who has been for the last week environed by eternal snows, and hemmed in by the Shreekhorn, and the Wetterhorn, and the Jungfrau, should stoop to take notice of a grovelling being who crawls along the level surface of the county of Cumberland, is an instance of genuine steadiness and equal serenity of temper, which will not pass unobserved and unadmired before so accurate an observer as yourself. Yet I dare say you think yourself most magnificent, with your Hardknot and Wrynose, and discover in your Lilliput, risings and fallings invisible to the grosser organs of the inhabitants of Brobdignag.



If you read on thus far, I am sure your patience will hold out no longer, and my letter goes into the fire, which in your cold part of the world you will certainly be sitting over when my packet arrives, about the end of the month. You then go to Lady Muncaster, and with a glance on your seven-fold shield, on which the setting sun is gleaming with a brilliancy which would throw a stoic into raptures, you lament over me as a poor, infatuated, perverted renegade, 'false to my gods, my country, and my father.' The greatest punishment your old regard will suffer you to inflict on me, will be a perpetual condemnation to breathe the air of the House of Commons, and to have no other ideas of a country prospect, or a country life, than can be collected from a stare from Richmond hill, or a dinner at the Star and Garter. No, Muncaster, I am no renegade. True to my first love, a long and intimate acquaintance has made me find out so many excellences and perfections that my affections are not to be changed, though in the course of my travels I see a fairer face, or a more exquisite symmetry,

'Tis the dear, the blest effect of Colia altogether.'

If therefore you should hear of my taking a country house in one of the Swiss cantons, don't take it for granted that I have forgot the land of promise. Allow now and then a transient infidelity; my constancy shall be unshaken to my true Dulcinea. 'These are my visits, but she is my home.'

"But to drop all metaphor, I have never been in any other part of the world, for which I could quit a residence in England with so little regret: God grant that the public and private state of our own country may never reduce it to such a situation as to give this the

preference in my esteem. At present I have the same unalterable affection for Old England, founded as I think in reason, or as foreigners would tell me, in prejudice; but I feel sometimes infected with a little of your own anxiety; I fancy I see storms arising, which already 'no bigger than a man's hand,' will by and by overspread and blacken the whole face of heaven. It is not the confusion of parties, and their quarrelling and battling in the House of Commons, which makes me despair of the republic, (if I knew a word half way between 'apprehend for' and 'despair,' that would best express my meaning,) but it is the universal corruption and profligacy of the times, which taking its rise amongst the rich and luxurious, has now extended its baneful influence and spread its destructive poison through the whole body of the people. When the mass of blood is corrupt, there is no remedy but amputation.

"I beg my best remembrances to Lady Muncaster, and my little friends, Penny and Gam. Tell the latter if he will meet me at Spa, I will turn him into a pancake as often as he will.

"Believe me to be ever yours most affectionately,  
W. WILBERFORCE.

His discussions with Isaac Milner were continued throughout this journey, until "by degrees I imbibed his sentiments, though I must confess with shame, that they long remained merely as opinions assented to by my understanding, but not influencing my heart. My interest in them certainly increased, and at length I began to be impressed with a sense of their importance. Milner, though full of levity on all other subjects, never spoke on this but with the utmost seriousness, and all

he said, tended to increase my attention to religion." So interesting were these conversations now become to him, that his fellow-travellers complained of the infrequency of his visits to their carriage. In this state of feeling he arrived at Spa, and spent almost six weeks in that "curious assemblage from all parts of Europe." Amongst the rest were many of his English friends; and though on some few points he now controverted their opinions, yet in general he joined freely in their ordinary pleasures. "Mrs. Crewe," he says, "can not believe that I can think it wrong to go to the play. Surprised at hearing that halting on the Sunday was my wish, and not my mother's." Yet though his outward appearance gave little evidence of their existence, deeper feelings were at work beneath. "Often while in the full enjoyment of all that this world could bestow, my conscience told me that in the true sense of the word, I was not a Christian. I laughed, I sang, I was apparently gay and happy, but the thought would steal across me, 'What madness is all this; to continue easy in a state in which a sudden call out of the world would consign me to everlasting misery, and that, when eternal happiness is within my grasp!' For I had received into my understanding the great truths of the Gospel, and believed that its offers were free and universal; and that God had promised to give his Holy Spirit to them that asked for it. At length such thoughts as these completely occupied my mind, and I began to pray earnestly." "Began three or four days ago," he says, Oct. 25th, "to get up very early. In the solitude and self-conversation of the morning, had thoughts, which I trust will come to something." "As soon as I reflected seriously upon these subjects, the deep guilt and black ingratitude of my past life forced

itself upon me in the strongest colors, and I condemned myself for having wasted my precious time, and opportunities, and talents." Thus he returned home; another man in his inner being, yet manifesting outwardly so little of the hidden struggle, "that it was not," says one of his companions, "until many months after our return, that I learned what had been passing in his mind."

## CHAPTER IV.

UPON the 10th of November he reached Wimbledon, and as Parliament did not meet until the following February, he was much alone, and had leisure to commune with himself. The more he reflected, the deeper became his new impressions. "It was not so much," he has said, "the fear of punishment by which I was affected, as a sense of my great sinfulness in having so long neglected the unspeakable mercies of my God and Saviour; and such was the effect which this thought produced, that for months I was in a state of the deepest depression, from strong convictions of my guilt. Indeed nothing which I have ever read in the accounts of others, exceeded what I then felt." These were now his habitual feelings; carefully concealed from others, and in some measure no doubt dispelled by company, but reviving in their full force as soon as he retired into himself.

Whilst this struggle was at its height, he commenced a private journal, with the view of making himself "humble and watchful." The entries of this private record mark the difficulties and variations of his mind, while they show strikingly the spirit of practical improvement by which he was directed.

"Nov. 24th. Heard the Bible read two hours—Pascal one hour and a quarter—meditation one hour and a

quarter—business the same. If ever I take myself from the immediate consideration of serious things, I entirely lose sight of them; this must be a lesson to me to keep them constantly in view. Pitt called, and commended Butler's Analogy—resolved to write to him, and discover to him what I am occupied about: this will save me much embarrassment, and I hope give me more command both of my time and conduct.

"25th. Up at six—private devotions half an hour—Pascal three quarters—to town on business. I feel quite giddy and distracted by the tumult, except when in situations of which I am rather ashamed, as in the stage-coach: the shame, pride; but a useful lesson. St. Antholyn's—Mr. Forster's—felt much devotion, and wondered at a man who fell asleep during the Psalms: during the sermon I fell asleep myself. Walked, and stage-coach, to save the expense of a chaise.

"26th. Went out early—wrote to S., and got his answer, very affectionate and kind, God bless him—refused to go to Camden Place, and to Pitt's; but all religious thoughts go off in London—I hope by explaining my situation and feelings, to relieve myself from my embarrassment.

"Sunday, 27th. Up at six—devotions half an hour—Pascal three quarters—Butler three quarters—church—read the Bible, too ramblingly, for an hour—heard Butler, but not attentively, two hours—meditated twenty minutes—hope I was more attentive at church than usual, but serious thoughts vanished the moment I went out of it, and very insensible and cold in the evening service—some very strong feelings when I went to bed; God turn them to account, and in any way bring me to himself. I have been thinking I have been doing well by living alone, and reading generally on

religious subjects; I must awake to my dangerous state, and never be at rest till I have made my peace with God. My heart is so hard, my blindness so great, that I can not get a due hatred of sin, though I see I am all corrupt, and blinded to the perception of spiritual things.

"28th. I hope as long as I live to be the better for the meditation of this evening; it was on the sinfulness of my own heart, and its blindness and weakness. True, Lord, I am wretched, and miserable, and blind, and naked. What infinite love, that Christ should die to save such a sinner, and how necessary is it He should save us altogether, that we may appear before God with nothing of our own! God grant I may not deceive myself, in thinking I feel the beginnings of Gospel comfort. Began this night constant family prayer, and resolved to have it every morning and evening, and to read a chapter when time.

"Tuesday, 29th. I bless God I enjoyed comfort in prayer this evening. I must keep my own unworthiness ever in view. Pride is my greatest stumbling-block; and there is danger in it in two ways—lest it should make me desist from a Christian life, through fear of the world, my friends, etc.; or if I persevere, lest it should make me vain of so doing. In all disputes on religion, I must be particularly on my guard to distinguish it from a zeal for God and his cause. I must consider and set down the marks whereby they may be known from each other. I will form a plan of my particular duty, praying God to enable me to do it properly, and set it before me as a chart of the country, and map of the road I must travel. Every morning some subject of thought for the hours of walking, lounging, etc., if alone.

"Nov. 30th. Was very fervent in prayer this morning, and thought these warm impressions would never go off. Yet in vain endeavored in the evening to rouse myself. God grant it may not all prove vain; oh! if it does, how will my punishment be deservedly increased! The only way I find of moving myself, is by thinking of my great transgressions, weakness, blindness, and of God's having promised to supply these defects. But though I firmly believe them, yet I read of future judgment, and think of God's wrath against sinners, with no great emotions. What can so strongly show the stony heart? O God! give me a heart of flesh! Nothing so convinces me of the dreadful state of my own mind, as the possibility, which, if I did not know it from experience, I should believe impossible, of my being ashamed of Christ. Ashamed of the Creator of all things! One who has received infinite pardon and mercy, ashamed of the dispenser of it, and that in a country where his name is professed! Oh! what should I have done in persecuting times? (Forgot to set down that when my servants came in the first time to family prayer, I felt ashamed.)"

"I thought seriously this evening of going to converse with Mr. Newton—waked in the night—obliged to compel myself to think of God.

"Dec. 2d. Resolved again about Mr. Newton. It may do good; he will pray for me; his experience may enable him to direct me to new grounds of humiliation, and it is that only which I can perceive God's Spirit employ to any effect. It can do no harm, for that is a scandalous objection which keeps occurring to me, that if ever my sentiments change, I shall be ashamed of having done it. It can only humble me, and, whatever is the right way, if truth be right, I ought to be hum-



bled—but sentiments change! Kept debating in that unsettled way, to which I have used myself, whether to go to London or not, and then how; wishing to save expense, I hope with a good motive, went at last in the stage to town; inquired for old Newton, but found he lived too far off for me to see him; lingered till time to go to Mr. Forster's; much struck with the text, 2 Chron. 15:2; afterwards walked home."

He now began to open to his friends the change which had passed upon him. His own way he hoped would be clearer when his principles were understood; and the frank avowal of his altered views was due to those with whom he had lived hitherto in levity and thoughtlessness. Some treated this announcement as the effect of a temporary depression, which social intercourse would soon relieve; one threw angrily his letter in the fire; others, knowing that his past life had not been vicious, imagined that he could but turn ascetic, and regretted their expected loss of his social accomplishments and political assistance. He wrote to Mr. Pitt amongst the rest, opening fully the grounds on which he acted, and the bearing of his new principles upon his public conduct. "I told him that though I should ever feel a strong affection for him, and had every reason to believe that I should be in general able to support him, yet I could no more be so much a party man as I had been before." On the 2d of December, "I got," he says, "Pitt's answer—much affected by it—to see him in the morning." "It was full of kindness; nothing I had told him, he said, could affect our friendship; that he wished me always to act as I thought right. I had said that I thought when we met we had better not discuss the topics of my letter. 'Why not

discuss them?' was his answer. 'Let me come to Wimbledon to-morrow to talk them over with you.' He thought that I was out of spirits, and that company and conversation would be the best way of dissipating my impressions." Mr. Pitt came the next morning, as he had proposed, and found Mr. Wilberforce not unprepared for the discussion. "I had prayed," he says, "to God, I hope with some sincerity, not to lead me into disputing for my own exaltation, but for his glory. Conversed with Pitt near two hours, and opened myself completely to him. I admitted that, as far as I could conform to the world, with a perfect regard to my duty to God, myself, and my fellow-creatures, I was bound to do it; that no inward feelings ought to be taken as demonstrations of the Spirit being in any man, (was not this too general? 'witnesseth with one Spirit,' etc.,) but only the change of disposition and conduct." "He tried to reason me out of my convictions, but soon found himself unable to combat their correctness, if Christianity were true. The fact is, he was so absorbed in politics, that he had never given himself time for due reflection on religion. But amongst other things, he declared to me that Bishop Butler's work raised in his mind more doubts than it had answered."

Though he now felt more than ever the need of some like-minded associates in the narrow path which lay before him, he could scarcely bring himself to form these new connections. "Had a good deal of debate with myself," he says, Dec. 3d, "about seeing Newton; but the rather right if I talk upon the subject with those who differ from me, as I am so new to it myself." This self-debate issued in his writing to Mr. Newton.

*To the Rev. John Newton.*

*"Dec. 2d, 1785.*

"SIR: There is no need of apology for intruding on you when the errand is religion. I wish to have some serious conversation with you, and will take the liberty of calling on you for that purpose in half an hour; when, if you can not receive me, you will have the goodness to let me have a letter put into my hands at the door, naming a time and place for our meeting, the earlier the more agreeable to me. I have had ten thousand doubts within myself whether or not I should discover myself to you; but every argument against doing it has its foundation in pride. I am sure you will hold yourself bound to let no one living know of this application, or of my visit, till I release you from the obligation." [What follows, as well as the signature, is torn off.]

"P.S.—Remember that I must be secret, and that the gallery of the House is now so universally attended that the face of a member of Parliament is pretty well known."

This letter he took with him upon Sunday, Dec. 4th, into the city, and "delivered it" himself "to old Newton at his church." The following Wednesday was named for an interview; and then, says he, "after walking about the Square once or twice before I could persuade myself, I called upon old Newton, was much affected in conversing with him—something very pleasing and unaffected in him. He told me he always had entertained hopes and confidence that God would some time bring me to Him; that he had heard from J. Thornton we had declined Sunday visits abroad; on the whole he encouraged me—though got nothing new from him, as how could I, except a good hint, that he

never found it answer to dispute, and that it was as well not to make visits that one disliked over agreeable. When I came away, I found my mind in a calm, tranquil state, more humbled, and looking more devoutly up to God." It was part of Mr. Newton's counsel, that he should not hastily form new connections, nor widely separate from his former friends. This very day, accordingly, he says: "As I promised, I went to Pitt's—sad work—I went there in fear, and for some time kept an awe on my mind; my feelings lessened in the evening, and I could scarce lift up myself in prayer to God at night."

"7th. At Holwood—up early and prayed, but not with much warmth—then to the St. John's at Beckenham. In chaise opened myself to —, who had felt much four years ago when very ill. He says that H. took off his then religious feelings; but, query, what did he give him in the room of them? Rather tried to show off at the St. John's, and completely forgot God; came away in a sad state to town, and was reduced almost to wish myself like others when I saw the carriages and people going to court, etc. With what different sensations of confidence and comfort did I come away from Newton and Beckenham! the one was confidence in myself, the other in God. Got out of town; but instead of mending when alone, as I dismissed all caution, I grew worse, and my mind in a sad state this evening; could scarcely pray, but will hope and wait on God. Thursday, 8th. Very cold all day, and dead to religious things; could not warm myself in prayer or meditation; even doubted if I was in the right way; and all generals; no particular objection. O God! deliver me from myself; when I trust to myself I am darkness and weakness."

He thus found, as every child of God has found, the struggle between the flesh and the spirit in the outset of the Christian course, a time of great trial, often giving occasion for deep humiliation; and that it is only by long-continued self-discipline, and many and oft-repeated lessons of experience, that the Christian can attain to the power of mingling unstained in the necessary intercourse of life; and, withdrawing from all that is not absolutely required by the duties of the station in which God has placed him, can pursue steadily his course. Even before he had reached the experience of the time of which we now speak, he had entered in his journal:

"At the levee, and then dined at Pitt's—sort of Cabinet dinner; was often thinking that pompous Thurlow and elegant Carmarthen would soon appear in the same row with the poor fellow that waited behind their chairs."

We will make a few more extracts from his diary, as selected by his sons, exhibiting, as it does, the struggles of the heart in passing from death unto life, from the state of a servant of sin to that of the child of God.

"Dec. 9th. God, I hope, has had mercy on me, and given me again some spark of grace. Dined at Mrs. Wilberforce's, (his aunt;) Mr. Thornton there. How unaffectedly happy he is. Oh! that I were like him. I grow hardened and more callous than ever. A little moved in prayer; but when I leave my study I can not keep religious thoughts and impressions on my mind.

"Dec. 11th, Sunday.—Heard Newton on the '*addiction*' of the soul to God. 'They that observe lying vanities shall forsake their own mercy.'—Excellent. He shows his whole heart is engaged. I felt sometimes moved at church, but am still callous.

"12th. More fervent, I hope, in prayer—resolved

more in God's strength; therefore, I hope, likely to keep my resolutions; rather shocked at Lady L.'s; these people have no thought of their souls.

"18th. I hope I feel more than I did of divine assistance. May I be enabled to submit to it in distrust of myself. I do not know what to make of myself; but I resolve, under God, to go on. Much struck in Mr. Newton's Narrative, where he says he once persevered two years, and went back again. Oh! may I be preserved from relapse! and yet, if I can not stand now, how shall I be able to do it when the struggle comes on in earnest? I am too intent upon shining in company, and must curb myself here."

"Behold me," he writes to his sister, "by my own fireside, in all the state of an arm-chair, and the peaceable possession of my own time, which I am endeavoring to improve to some more rational purposes than those to which I have in general made it subservient. My studies chiefly point one way, but then it is that way in which it is of infinite importance that our views should be clear and settled. I hope my dear sister will in some degree be the better for them; at least, if nothing else, she will have a proof of my affection, when, as I design, I send her from time to time a sheet full of my lucubrations. Letter-writing, like conversation, should be a transcript of the thoughts for the hour in which one has the pen in hand; and as my thoughts run generally in one current, it would be a violence to attempt to turn the stream into another channel: not that I mean to give up the propriety of 'from grave to gay,' but the one should be the business, the other the relaxation of life; and there is no such firm ground on which to fix the foundation of a perpetual gayety, (though gayety but ill expresses my idea,) as to have

been grave to good purpose. I will give it a more worthy epithet than gay. Let me call it serenity, tranquillity, composure which is not to be destroyed; though, in the limited degree in which we yet possess it, it may, alas! be ruffled by all the tumult and noise, and even all the accidents and misfortunes of the world. May you, my dear sister, be possessed of that temper which we can only get one way, but in that may be sure of it."

To this serenity of mind he had not yet attained. "I go off sadly," he says now of himself, "on different days"—"I am colder and more insensible than I was—I ramble—O God! protect me from myself—I never yet think of religion but by constraint—I am in a most doubtful state. To Newton's, but when he prayed I was cold and dead; and the moment we were out of his house, seriousness decayed." "Very wretched—all sense gone." "Colder than ever—very unhappy—called at Newton's, and bitterly moved; he comforted me." Yet some gleams of the coming sunshine even now gladdened him at favored intervals.

"Tuesday, Dec. 20th.—More enlarged and sincere in prayer—went to hear Romaine—dined at the Adelpi: both before and afterwards much affected by seriousness. Went to hear Forster, who was very good: enabled to join in the prayers with my whole heart, and never so happy in my life as this whole evening—enlarged in private prayer, and have a good hope towards God." "Got up Wednesday morning in the same frame of mind, and filled with peace, and hope, and humility; yet some doubts if all this is real, or will be lasting—Newton's church—he has my leave to mention my case to my aunt and Mr. Thornton—not quite so warm, but still a good hope—I trust God is with me; but he must

ever keep beside me; for I fall the moment I am left to myself. I staid in town to attend the ordinances, and have been gloriously blest in them.

"23d. I do not find the use of keeping a diary in this way; I will therefore try how I go on without. I think it rather makes me satisfied with myself, by leading me to compare the number of hours I spend seriously with those others do; when all depends on doing it to good purpose. Was strengthened in prayer, and trust I shall be able to live more to God, which determined to do. Much affected by Doddridge's directions for spending time, and hope to conform to them in some degree: it must be by force at first, for I find I perpetually wander from serious thoughts when I am off my guard.

"24th. Up very early, and passed some hours tolerably, according to my resolutions; but indolence comes upon me. Resolved to practise Doddridge's rules, and prayed to God to enable me. I wish to take the sacrament to-morrow, that it may fix this variable, and affect this senseless heart, which of itself is dead alike to all emotions of terror and gratitude in spiritual things."

He did not venture to communicate according to his wish; he had learned to view the eucharist rather as an act of self-dedication than as a means of grace; or the spirit which induced him to record, "there is nothing so blessed to me as the Gospel ordinances," would have led him at this season to the table of the Lord. His diligence in using all the means of grace was a striking feature of his new character. "What my heart most impels me now to say to you," he writes to his sister, "is 'Search the Scriptures,' and with all that earnestness and constancy which that book claims in which 'are the words of eternal life.' Never read



it without praying to God that He will open your eyes to understand it; for the power of comprehending it comes from Him, and Him only. 'Seek and ye shall find,' says our Saviour; 'Take heed how ye hear;' which implies, that unless we seek, and diligently too, we shall not find; and unless we take heed we shall be deceived in hearing. There is no opinion so fatal as that which is commonly received in *these liberal* days, that a person is in a safe state with respect to a future world, if he acts tolerably up to his knowledge and convictions, though he may not have taken much pains about acquiring this knowledge or fixing these convictions." What he pressed on her, he diligently practised. He now spent several hours daily in earnest study of the Scripture; he took lodgings in the Adelphi, that he might be within reach of pastoral instructions which simply inculcated its truths; and he began to seek the friendship of those who feared God. He withdrew his name from all the clubs of which he was a member—a precaution, which he thought essential to his safety in the critical circumstances in which he was placed. "Living in town," he says, "disagrees with me; I must endeavor to find Christian converse in the country." To this he was seasonably invited two days afterward, by his near connection, Mr. Thornton.

*To William Wilberforce, Esq.*

"CLAPHAM, Dec. 24.

"MY DEAR SIR: You may easier conceive than I can express the satisfaction I had from a few minutes' converse with Mr. Newton yesterday afternoon. As in nature, so in grace, what comes very quickly forward, rarely abides long: I am aware of your difficulties,

which call for great prudence and caution. Those that believe, must not make haste, but be content to go God's pace, and watch the leadings of His providence, as of the pillar and the cloud formerly. There is a danger in running from church to church to hear : more profit is obtained under one or two ministers. You can not be too wary in forming connections. The fewer new friends, perhaps the better. I shall at any time be glad to see you here, and can quarter you, and let you be as retired as possible, and hope we shall never be on a footing of ceremony.

"I am, my dear sir,

"your most devoted kinsman,

"JOHN. THORNTON."

"Jan. 11th. To town and Woolnooth—after church, brought Mr. Newton down in chaise—dined and slept at Wimbledon—composure and happiness of a true Christian : he read the account of his poor niece's death, and shed tears of joy. 12th. Newton staid—Thornton Astell surprised us together on the common in the evening. Expect to hear myself now universally given out to be a Methodist : may God grant it may be said with truth."

To his mother, who had been alarmed by some such rumor, he explained soon afterwards his real sentiments. "It is not, believe me, to my own imagination, or to any system formed in my closet, that I look for my principles ; it is to the very source to which you refer me, the Scriptures. . . . All that I contend for is, that we should really make this book the criterion of our opinions and actions, and not read it and then think that we do so of course ; but if we do this, we must reckon on not finding ourselves able to comply

with all those customs of the world, in which many who call themselves Christians are too apt to indulge without reflection: . . . we must of course [therefore] be subject to the charge of excess and singularity. But in what will this singularity consist? Not merely in indifferent things; no, in these our Saviour always conformed, and took occasion to check an unnecessary strictness into which he saw men were led by overstraining a good principle. In what then will these peculiarities appear? Take our great Master's own words: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: and thy neighbor as thyself.' It would be easy to dilate on this text; and I am afraid that we should find at the close of the discourse, that the picture was very unlike the men of this world. 'But who is my neighbor?' Here too our Saviour has instructed us by the parable which follows. It is evident we are to consider our peculiar situations, and in these to do all the good we can. Some men are thrown into public, some have their lot in private life. These different states have their corresponding duties; and he whose destination is of the former sort, will do as ill to immure himself in solitude, as he who is only a village Hampden would, were he to head an army or address a senate. What I have said will, I hope, be sufficient to remove any apprehensions that I mean to shut myself up either in my closet in town, or in my hermitage in the country. No, my dear mother, in my circumstances this would merit no better name than desertion; and if I were thus to fly from the post where Providence has placed me, I know not how I could look for the blessing of God upon my retirement; and without this heavenly assistance, either in the world or in solitude our own endea-

vors will be equally ineffectual. When I consider the particulars of my duty, I blush at the review ; but my shame is not occasioned by my thinking that I am too studiously diligent in the business of life ; on the contrary, I then feel that I am serving God best when from proper motives I am most actively engaged in it. What humbles me is, the sense that I forego so many opportunities of doing good ; and it is my constant prayer that God will enable me to serve him more steadily, and my fellow-creatures more assiduously ; and I trust that my prayers will be granted through the intercession of that Saviour 'by whom' only 'we have access with confidence into this grace wherein we stand ;' and who has promised that He will lead on His people from strength to strength, and gradually form them to a more complete resemblance of their divine original."

"Watch and pray," he wrote earnestly to his sister ; "read the word of God, imploring that true wisdom which may enable you to comprehend and fix it in your heart, that it may gradually produce its effect under the operation of the Holy Spirit, in renewing the mind and purifying the conduct. This it will do more and more the longer we live under its influence ; and it is to the honor of religion, that those who when they first began to run the Christian course, were in extremes . . . . enthusiastical, perhaps, or rigidly severe . . . . will often by degrees lose their several imperfections, which though by the world laid unfairly to the account of their religion, were yet undoubtedly so many disparagements to it : . . . like some of our Westmoreland evenings, when though in the course of the day the skies have been obscured by clouds and vapors, yet towards its close the sun beams forth with unsullied

lustre, and descends below the horizon in the full display of all his glories; shall I pursue the metaphor, just to suggest, that this is the earnest of a joyful rising, which will not be disappointed? The great thing we have to do, is to be perpetually reminding ourselves that we are but strangers and pilgrims, having no abiding city, but looking for a city which hath foundations; and by the power of habit which God has been graciously pleased to bestow upon us, our work will every day become easier, if we accustom ourselves to cast our care on Him, and labor in a persuasion of His coöperation. The true Christian will desire to have constant communion with his Saviour. The eastern nations had their talismans, which were to advertise them of every danger, and guard them from every mischief. Be the love of Christ our talisman."

Upon Good Friday, April 14th, he communicated; and upon the following Easter Sunday enters in his journal: "At Stock with the Unwins—day delightful, out almost all of it—communicated—very happy."

*To Miss Wilberforce.*

"Stock, April 16, 1786.

"ABOUT five o'clock yesterday I put myself into a post-chaise, and in four hours found myself safely lodged with the vicar of Stock. It is more than a month since I slept out of town, and I feel all that Milton attributes to the man who has been

'long in populous cities pent,  
Where houses thick and sewers annoy the air.'

I scarce recollect to have spent so pleasant a day as that which is now nearly over. My heart opens involun-

tarily to Unwin and his wife ; I fancy I have been with them every day since we first became acquainted at Nottingham, and expand to them with all the confidence of a twelve years' intimacy. Can my dear sister wonder that I call on her to participate in the pleasure I am tasting ? I know how you sympathize in the happiness of those you love, and I could not therefore forgive myself if I were to keep my raptures to myself, and not invite you to partake of my enjoyment. The day has been delightful. I was out before six, and made the fields my oratory, the sun shining as bright and as warm as at midsummer. I think my own devotions become more fervent when offered in this way amidst the general chorus, with which all nature seems on such a morning to be swelling the song of praise and thanksgiving ; and except the time that has been spent at church and at dinner, . . . and neither in the sanctuary nor at table I trust, had I a heart unwarmed with gratitude to the Giver of all good things. . . . I have been all day basking in the sun. On any other day I should not have been so happy : a sense that I was neglecting the duties of my situation might have interrupted the course of my enjoyments, and have taken from their *totality* ; for in such a situation as mine every moment may be made useful to the happiness of my fellow-creatures. But the Sabbath is a season of rest, in which we may be allowed to unbend the mind, and give a complete loose to those emotions of gratitude and admiration, which a contemplation of the works, and a consideration of the goodness, of God can not fail to excite in a mind of the smallest sensibility. And surely this Sabbath, of all others, is that which calls forth these feelings in a supreme degree ; a frame of united love and triumph well becomes it,

and holy confidence and unrestrained affection. May every Sabbath be to me, and to those I love, a renewal of these feelings, of which the small tastes we have in this life should make us look forward to that eternal rest which awaits the people of God; when the whole will be a never-ending enjoyment of those feelings of love and joy, and admiration and gratitude, which are, even in the limited degree we here experience them, the truest sources of comfort; when these, I say, will dictate perpetual songs of thanksgiving without fear and without satiety. My eyes are bad, but I could not resist the impulse I felt to call on you and tell you how happy I have been." The sky was now brightening over him into a clearer day. "By degrees," he says himself in the calm retrospect of a peaceful age, "the promises and offers of the Gospel produced in me something of a settled peace of conscience. I devoted myself for whatever might be the term of my future life to the service of my God and Saviour; and with many deficiencies and infirmities I continue to this day."

## CHAPTER V.

GREAT as had been his earnestness in the pursuit of his duties, he now entered upon them with new motives and in a new spirit, making every thing subservient to the one purpose. He "told Pitt he could not promise him unqualified support," and though hopeless, after the failure of that minister, of carrying any general measure of reform, he undertook to introduce some practical improvements of local application, designed to purify county elections by a general registration of the freeholders, and opening the poll at one and the same time in various places. In the latter part of the session, delighting in the escape if only for the night, from London and its associations, he began to sleep constantly at Wimbledon. Yet, much as he enjoyed it, he found even here it was impossible to escape from the plague of his own corrupt heart, and we find him writing thus: "In how sad a state is my soul to-day! Yesterday, when I had company at Wimbledon, I gave the reins to myself, sometimes forgetting, at others acting in defiance of, God. If Christ's promise, that He will hear those who call upon Him, were less direct and general, I durst not plead for mercy, but should fall into despair: and from what I perceive of the actual workings of my own soul, the next step would be an abandoning of myself to all impiety. But Christ has



graciously promised that He will be unto us not only redemption but sanctification. Oh! give me a new heart, and put a right spirit within me, that I may keep Thy statutes and do them: this week has been sadly spent. I will keep a more strict watch over myself, by God's grace." Happy for him that he had thus been taught to lean on Jesus for every thing. He was to him indeed wisdom as well as sanctification and redemption. This careful self-inspection was not a mere casual thing, the result of some more alarming fall into sin by which his conscience was disturbed. His diary abounds in evidences of its habitual character; and he about this time adopted the plan of entering in a book, plans and purposes and suggestions for the improvement of his own mind and soul, and the benefit of his friends. Even his servants were objects of his solicitude, and great as was his delight in his country resort, thinking it "an unfavorable situation for his servants," and a needless increase of his personal expenses, he had determined to give it up. It would be a needless repetition for the reader, to present to him the record of his daily exercises of self-examination and self-condemnation. They were constantly repeated, and he found, as every child of God who assumes for his standard of judgment the lofty requirements of the divine law, ever finds, new cause for self-reproach, and new occasion to apply the sprinkling of that blood which alone cleanseth from sin. Thus at this time we find among other entries, June 25: "I this day received the Sacrament, too hastily, I fear, though I thought it right not to suffer myself to be determined by my momentary feelings. I do not think I have a sufficiently strong conviction of sin, yet I see plainly that I am an ungrateful, stupid, guilty creature. I believe that Christ died that all such who would throw

themselves on Him, renouncing every claim of their own, and relying on His assurance of free pardon, might be reconciled to God, and receive the free gift of His Holy Spirit to renew them after the image of God, in righteousness and true holiness; and I hope in time to find such a change wrought by degrees in myself as may evidence to me that He has called me from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. I wander dreadfully at church." In a previous entry in his journal, he had recorded his apprehension of being betrayed into a feeling of satisfaction with himself; and now, July 2d, he says: "I take up my pen because it is my rule, but I have not been examining myself with that seriousness with which we ought to look into ourselves from time to time. That wandering spirit and indolent way of doing business are little, if at all defeated; and my rules, resolved on with thought and prayer, are forgotten. O my God! grant that I may be watchful, and not mistake that disapprobation which can not but arise within me when I look at myself, and recollect all my advantages, and my first sensations and resolutions, and how little the event is answerable—let me not mistake this for that contrition and repentance which operates upon the mind with a settled force, and keeps the whole man, if not always, yet for the most part, waiting and anxiously looking for God." Such entries are mere specimens of his daily searching inquiries into his state, made with the eye of an enlightened understanding, and under the direction of a will subdued to the divine Will, and a heart fixed in its determination that he would do all to the glory of God.

At the close of the session, on the 6th of July, 1786, he left London, to join his mother and sister in the north, and with them he made a visit to his cousin,

Samuel Smith, at his country residence at Wilford, where he remained two months, during which time he not only applied himself successfully to the removal of the prejudices against his new principles and modes of action which had been entertained by his mother and other relatives, but devoted himself also to a regular course of mental training and spiritual discipline, of which the entries in his journal furnish abundant evidence. No hermit in his cave, no monk in the seclusion of his cell, ever strove more sedulously to search out the hidden roots of bitterness, and eradicate them, than he did. Thus his sons remark, that "his studies were varied and accurate, but the book which he studied most carefully, and by which, perhaps, above all others, his mental faculties were perfected, was the Holy Scripture. This he read, and weighed, and pondered over, studying its connection and details, and mastering, especially in their own tongue, the apostolical epistles. This was his chief occupation at Wilford. It was now his daily care to instruct his understanding and discipline his heart. Nor was it an easy path upon which he had set out. Though its later stages were gladdened by a settled peace, at this period almost every entry of his journal records a struggle and a conflict. 'At church, I wander more than ever,' he says, July 30, 'and can scarce keep awake; my thoughts are always straying. Do thou, O God! set my affections on purer pleasures. Christ should be a Christian's delight and glory. I will endeavor, by God's help, to excite in myself an anxiety and longing for the joys of heaven, and for deliverance from this scene of ingratitude and sin; yet, mistake not impatience under the fatigues of the combat for a lawful, and indeed an enjoined earnestness for, and anticipation of the crown of victory. I say solemnly in the

presence of God this day, that, were I to die, I know not what would be my eternal portion. If I live in some degree under the habitual impression of God's presence, yet I can not, or rather I will not, keep true to Him; and every night I have to look back on a day misemployed, or not improved with fervency and diligence. O God! do Thou enable me to live more to Thee, to look to Jesus with a single eye, and by degrees to have the renewed nature implanted in me, and the heart of stone removed.' And again, a fortnight later, he says: 'I see plainly the sad way in which I am going on. Of myself I have not power to change it. Do Thou, O Thou Saviour of sinners, have mercy on me, and let me not be an instance of one who, having month after month despised thy goodness and long-suffering, has treasured up to himself wrath against the day of wrath. The sense of God's presence seldom stays on my mind when I am in company: and at times I even have doubts and difficulties about the truth of the great doctrines of Christianity.' Yet, in spite of difficulties, he was resolved to persevere. 'With God,' he reasons with himself, 'nothing is impossible.' Work out, then, thy own salvation. Purify thy heart, thou double-minded; labor to enter into that rest. The way is narrow; the enemies are many, to thee particularly; . . . rich, great, etc.; . . . but then we have God and Christ on our side; we have heavenly armor; the crown is everlasting life, and the struggle how short, compared with the eternity which follows it! Yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry.' While he thus encouraged himself, hoping against hope, there were at times already on his path gleams of brighter light. 'On this day,' he says, August 24th, 'I complete my twenty-seventh year. What reason have

I for humiliation and gratitude! May God, for Christ's sake, increase my desire to acquire the Christian temper and live the Christian life, and enable me to carry this desire into execution.' A few days later, he adds: 'I am just returned from receiving the sacrament.' I was enabled to be earnest in prayer, and to be contrite and humble under a sense of my unworthiness, and of the infinite mercy of God in Christ. I hope that I desire from my heart to lead henceforth a life more worthy of the Christian profession. May it be my meat and drink to do the will of God, my father. May He daily renew me by His Holy Spirit, and may I walk before Him in a frame made up of fear, and gratitude, and humble trust and assurance of His fatherly kindness and constant concern for me

"This progress was the fruit of unremitting toil and watchfulness. 'My chief temptations,' he says, 'against which to guard this week particularly, are: 1st, My thoughts wandering when reading or doing any thing. 2dly, Losing sight of God in company and at meals. This often begins by an affected vivacity. 3dly, I am apt to favor my wandering temper by too short and broken periods of study. To form my plan as carefully as I can to prevent these. Think how to serve those you are in the house with—in the village—your constituents. Look to God through Christ. . . . How does my experience convince me that true religion is to maintain communion with God, and that it all goes together. Let this be a warning. . . . Contempt of this world in itself, and views constantly set upon the next. Frequent aspirations. To call in at some houses in the village. To endeavor to keep my mind in a calm, humble frame—not too much vivacity. To put my prayers into words to prevent wandering. Consider always

before you take up any book what is your peculiar object in reading it, and keep that in view. Recollect all you read is then only useful when applied to purify the heart and life, or to fit you for the better discharge of your duties. To recapitulate verbally, *discutiendi causâ*. Let me try by prayer and contemplation to excite strong desires for future heavenly joys—to trust less to my own resolutions, and more to Christ.’ ”

We find him soon after, in conformity with his sense of duty, cultivating the favorable opinion of his constituents by attending the Cutlers’ Feast at Sheffield, but declining to attend the ball with which it closed, and which it was usual for the M. P. to countenance by his presence. And about this time we find him saying to himself: “Remember to pray that I may be cheerful without being dissipated.” A most important distinction, and one which can not be too deeply impressed on the minds of those young Christians who, like Wilberforce, are placed in a position in which every one is watching for opportunities to condemn either too great asceticism or too much conformity to the habits and pursuits in which the world finds its pleasure, but of which it realizes so decidedly the opposition to the demands of the law of God, that it never hesitates to condemn as hypocrites and pretenders those who participate in them while claiming to be separate from the world.

With regard to this subject, he would appear to have attained much wisdom, to have made large growth in heavenly things at an early period of his new life. This will always be the case when the heart is entirely renewed, and the will brought into complete subjection to the power of the Holy Ghost. The harmony of divine action is one of the peculiar evidences of the

unity of the Godhead and the perfection of His character. In grace, as in nature, there is a period of growth, followed by one in which the newly developed powers become consolidated and established—better able to endure the conflicting elements; and, while the buds and blossoms first opening in beauty are more attractive to the eye, their actual value is never known until the period of full maturity exhibits the fruits, which are to the praise and glory of the grace of Him by whom they have been grafted into the vine, or made to partake of the root and fatness of the olive. Thus the faithful young disciple shoots forth his beauteous branches, and exhibits the hopeful promise of the abundant harvest which passing years only serve to perfect; and the analogy may alas! hold good in the influence of blight and mildew on the one, and the inherent corruption of our nature and power of Satan on the other, causing some fruit to perish, while others in the same individual grow into the full richness of the husbandman's hope.

The correspondence of Mr. W. shows at an early period this active growth. He thus addresses a friend so early as February, 1787: "Indeed, my dear friend, I trust you do wish 'to be right;' and on that ground you may justly be congratulated. So long as you retain this frame of mind, all will be well. This is the perfectness and simplicity of heart mentioned in Scripture with expressions of peculiar approbation; and that tenderness of conscience, that humility and watchfulness which accompany it, admirably dispose us to walk through this scene of temptations as pilgrims and strangers who are seeking a better country, in constant dependence on God's grace through Christ, and looking for the guidance of that Good Shepherd who

kindly promises that He will 'carry the lambs in His bosom, and gently lead those who are with young.' These are figurative expressions, but they are not unmeaning ones; we should translate them into common language, and carry them about with us as eastern nations do their amulets and charms. Be not discouraged if you do not find your doubts so thoroughly eradicated as you flatter yourself they are: many good men, though in the main, and unshakenly convinced of the truth of Christianity, have been grievously harassed by them, and I believe they are often the suggestions of the Tempter, which neither reason nor Scripture give us any rule to distinguish from the suggestions of our own imagination. These objections are often not particular, or devoted to any one specific point, but it is rather a general sort of stupid doubting whether the whole be not a delusion. Perhaps the best way of combating the enemy is to fly from him in speculation, and to fight him practically. I mean, when our reason, on a fair inquiry, has been convinced, let us determine to act as if these things were true, and (such is the constitution of the human mind) we shall gradually find these incredulities dissipate, and obtain a more settled and deep-rooted satisfaction that 'they are not idle fables.' Never forget that Jesus Christ is to be made unto His people wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Were we ever to bear this in view, and act on it, how much more wise, and upright, and holy, we should be. It is pride and self-dependence that ruin us: whereas, were we to look with steadfast eye to the Author and finisher of our faith, we should learn to despise both the pleasures and griefs of this life, and long for that blessed day which, disencumbering the people of God from their fleshly



impediments, shall introduce them into that state of glory, of which Christ died to purchase for them the eternal possession." To his sister, who appears to have written to him in like manner of her doubts and difficulties, he writes a month later: "My dearest sister—You desire an answer by return of post. Therefore, though much hurried, I can not delay writing to you. I consider your doubts as the effect of bodily complaint, rather than a refusal of assent to the truths of Christianity; though satisfied, they again recur with undiminished force, and so they will continue to do, and you must be prepared to expect, and learn to disregard them. Perhaps the best way to rid yourself of them, is to act as though they did not exist; and I think they afford not sufficient ground for absenting yourself from the Communion. In receiving the Lord's Supper, we make a public profession of our being willing to risk our all on Christ, and to appear before our Maker, relying on His merits alone for our favorable acceptance with Him. We also solemnly devote ourselves to His service, and declare that we will endeavor to live to His glory, as those He has purchased, etc. Now in all this you could join from the bottom of your heart, and if fears and hesitations and doubts distract you, remember the poor man in the Gospel: 'Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief.' At all events, however, do not distress yourself, in debating whether you shall communicate or not, but comfort yourself by the assurance of Christ, that His yoke is easy, and His burden light, and that the pure in heart—they who are simple in their views and mean honestly, shall be blessed." To another friend who had sought advice on points which will be made evident by the answer we here annex, he gave counsel which will be looked

on with suspicion by some, and condemned by more, but which must be compared with his own practice at the time, before it is condemned. No desire for popularity, no wish to secure the favor of his constituents, was allowed to draw himself into any sinful compliance with the habits of the world. If, therefore, he should appear to lay down a less rigid rule for others, it was not from any desire for personal ease, but from the conviction which he expresses, that where the heart and affections are set on the things which are above, there will be no desire for the occupation of time in the pursuits of folly, which will no longer present any attraction. The desire for such things as *gratifications* is a sufficient evidence that the *heart is not right*. It is certainly necessary, however, to offer a caution, lest any should be beguiled by the supposed sanction of one so wise and holy, into venturing into paths which insensibly, but not the less certainly, diverge from that narrow way, which, and which alone, we are told, on the authority of Him in whom dwelt the fullness of the Godhead bodily, with all its wisdom and all its love, leads to life. The intoxicating excitement of the ball-room is certainly as inimical to Christian life as that of the theatre, while the waste of time at cards, to say nothing of the door they open for the introduction of gambling, is of itself an evil so great, that no one who realizes the responsibility which belongs to life can justify the misuse of so large a portion as is often given to this amusement. There are in this letter views of great value; yet it may be a matter for doubt whether Mr. Wilberforce would not himself have modified some of the expressions, which, if received without hesitation, may lead to undue compliance with

the usages of a world, of which we are told, "it is enmity against God."

"MY DEAR M.: It gives me pleasure to observe that, though you chide me for not letting you hear from me, you allow me credit for such a sincere concern for your welfare, as not to impute my silence to forgetfulness. Indeed, you do me no more than justice in this acquittal, for whether I tell you so or not, you are daily in my thoughts and prayers. What is it, in truth, that you have avowed, but that you have not attained to that stability of mind which you desire? that, in spite of the value and brightness of the heavenly prize, you find yourself perpetually drawn aside from the pursuit of it by temporal objects? We are all of us apt to be unreasonable in our expectations of the progress we are to make in our heavenly course. Ere we have well begun our journey, we look on ourselves as at the end of it, and deem it hard if we enjoy not those comforts which are reserved for those only who have borne the burthen and heat of the day: in both these respects, let us be more moderate, and neither be cast down if we do not find our attainments equal to our wishes, nor disquieted if our religious exercises do not afford us all the pleasure which we might hope to derive from them. But then, let not this produce in us such an acquiescence in our present state as may terminate in our sitting down contented with it. We must learn to press forward, humbly depending upon God's help for the success of our labors, and resigned in all respects to His sovereign will. Persevere, and may the God of grace, when you have suffered a while, comfort, strengthen, stablish, settle you. I need not suggest to you the benefit of religious contemplation, or how much more than reading, it tends to lift the soul

beyond the fogs and vapors of this nether atmosphere. The precise question you put to me is one of great nicety; and if it had been put to me by almost any one else, I believe I should have declined answering it in any other than those general terms which you forbid the use of. 'How far you may indulge in amusements without danger?' With respect to these same amusements, I conceive no rule can be applied of universal application and use—none that will solve to every one the several cases which occur in life, under the very different circumstances of different men; and yet, unless we lay down for ourselves beforehand, some determinate principle of action, when the time for decision comes, we shall be at a loss how to proceed, and judging hastily, and under an improper bias, our conclusion will be most likely erroneous. What, then, is to be done? What but that every one read his Bible with simplicity of heart, that he there observe the temper and conduct our Saviour prescribes to His disciples, and then, looking out and weighing the particulars of his own state, discover how he may best acquire the one and practise the other? Where any thing is directly contrary to the laws of God, there we ought to resist as stubbornly as possible. Now, the play-house seems to me to fall under this description, and in order to possess you with my sentiments on this subject, I will inclose you a little essay, which contains almost all I think, and will spare me the trouble of a recital: but there are other diversions of a more dubious nature—balls, concerts, cards, etc. It is impossible here to judge for another. In certain situations, it may be expedient to partake of them, rather than offend those with whom you are living, but *not as amusements to be enjoyed, but as temptations to be undergone.* It is easy

to see that the *whole current of Scripture* sets against that disposition to seek for our comfort in the vanities of life and the enjoyments of sense, which is too natural to us all. It directs us to pleasures of a more exalted kind—to joys of a superior nature; and therefore, that systematic balling, and concerting, and carding, is really adverse to the spirit of Christianity. Observe, I say systematic, for it is reduced to a system; it is not an occasional, but a constant and habitual mis-application of time and money, and, what is worse than all, of affections. But then we are not to abstain from all these indulgences which the world allows itself, and value ourselves on our abstemiousness, for that will bring on a proud and a morose spirit. The true way is to endeavor to supplant the fondness for them by the love of better things, 'to let our rejoicing be the testimony of our conscience that in simplicity and godly sincerity we have had our conversation in the world,' to learn to delight in the consciousness of His protection, whose favor is better than life, and in the anticipation of those pleasures which are at His right hand, for evermore. Could we arrive at this blessed temper, what mankind terms amusements and diversions would be to us either tedious or disgusting; and though on some occasions we might deem it expedient to conform, *yet we should do it for the sake of others, not for our own.* Of all others, it is perhaps the most dangerous practice for us to draw a line, and, as it were, *pale in* some of the common amusements in which we may judge that we ought to participate, from such prudential motives as I am alluding to, and then go on in the *constant use* of them in unsuspecting security: the habit of mind this brings on is very destructive, indeed, of the vital spirit of religion, and should be guarded

against with all care. \* \* \* \* I have said enough to make you understand me. The Christian's motto should be—'Watch always, for you know not in what hour the Son of Man will come.' In proportion as you may find yourself compelled to engage in diversions you may not thoroughly approve, examine yourself with more diligence, be more constant in your devotions, act like one, who, fearing that poison might lurk in his daily food, guarded against its effects by the daily use of antidotes. Remember that it is the great business of religion to purify our hearts, and inspire us with a more energetic longing for those perfections, which are to constitute the glories and happiness of our future being." It was about this period that he was himself suffering the defeat of his plans for personal retirement, by the crowd of company which followed and collected around him at his Rayrigg residence, and which compelled him to forego the pleasure he had hoped from tranquil communion with God, in order to meet the demands of his social position. He wrote himself to Rev. John Newton, evidently pouring out to him the breathings of his soul for rest. To this letter, Mr. Newton replied: "There is a tax upon your situation, and you feel it. I could wish you the same liberty, with respect to the employment of your time and the choice of your company, which I enjoy myself, but I know in your path it is impracticable. I am sorry your prospect of retirement has been so much interrupted, but the consequence is pleasing; you see a necessity for forming your future plans differently. It is thus, as I formerly hinted, the Lord teaches those who wait upon him the way in which they should walk, not directly, and at once, by advice they may receive from others, or by rules they may, *a priori*, lay down for

themselves, but gradually, by experience. The knowledge they thus obtain becomes properly their own, an inward principle, and therefore efficacious. Though the wisdom we ask of God is freely given; yet, with respect to the way in which we obtain it, we may be said to pay, and sometimes to pay dearly, for it. Yet it is well worth the purchase, whatever it may cost us. If the heart be upright, and the desire to serve Him be simple and genuine, the main thing is secured, and these hindrances will eventually prove helps, and even the slips and mistakes we may make will tend to make us walk more firmly. There are innumerable cases in life to which the general rules in Scripture do not directly and explicitly apply, nor will the books of casuistry afford us satisfaction. But *love* is the *best casuist*, and a sincere desire of pleasing God, by degrees, by the result of our own reflections, and by repeated approximations, will lead us nearer and nearer to that middle path which lies between the extremes of needless singularity and improper compliance. Communion with God is the great point: whatever is found to have a tendency to damp or indispose our spirits for this, must be either frankly given up, or, if continued, it must be a cross or burden which we verily believe it is His pleasure, all things considered, that we for the present should bear." This lays the axe at the root of all worldly conformity, for the gratification of the corrupt tendencies of the natural heart which may still linger in the soul of the believer. Like the Canaanites unsubdued in the land of promise, they will be found snares and causes of trial, and not the chosen companions and sources to which the soul turns for its delight. The joy of the child of God, his pleasure, and his life, are hid with Christ in God, and will be found there,

and there only. Just in the degree in which the gratification of the flesh is sought, or permitted, just in that degree will the life of God in the soul of man be rendered feeble; the Spirit, the alone Lord and giver of life, be grieved; and darkness take the place of that light which is the fruit of the Spirit.

He again writes to his sister, who appears to have been urged by their mother to accompany her to the theatre, and to have sought his counsel, as to how far she should comply. "Your letter, my dear sister, has been in my thoughts at intervals, ever since I received it, and I take up my pen to reply to it with no little reluctance; but I am sure you will expect my answer with anxiety, and it would be unkind and selfish to delay it any longer. I well know the tenderness of your mind, and it grieves me to say any thing that will wound it; nor do I suffer less from the apprehension that I am about to give pain to my dear mother. \* \*

\* \* \* \* Yet, in spite of all these considerations, I must speak out: the appeal you make to me is too forcible to be resisted, and when I reflect that I shall have to account for my answer to it at the bar of the great Judge of quick and dead, I can not—I dare not, withhold or smooth over my opinion. I must be as expeditious as possible; you know I have generally enough to do, and at this moment I am particularly pressed to prepare for the opening of the session to-morrow. In one word, then, I think the tendencies of the theatre most pernicious. This is my decided sentiment, not taken up lightly, but on mature consideration. I have not leisure to state to you at large the grounds on which it rests, and it is better not to take up the question, than not to do it complete justice. The bias under which you have weighed it is evident from the



arguments you urge, which are unworthy of your understanding. You are sensible that it is not enough that your own principles and frame of spirit are so settled as to be in no danger—though which of us can say so in such a case, seeing that we pray to be delivered from evil only on the ground of our not being led into temptation, which it is a mockery of God to ask, if we run into it with our eyes open. You view the matter in the light of example; yet you talk of going only to one or two plays, and of not staying to the farce, etc. Why, how will the generality of those who see you there know your motives for not being as frequent an attender as formerly, and for not remaining during the whole performance? It would be an affectation of humility to deny that your authority has very great weight in the town of Hull, and it may be thought, too, that my advice has some influence over you. Will not, then, your presence at the amusements of the theatre sanction them in the minds of all who see you there? At that day when a strict account shall be taken of all our actions, and when it will not be the least inquiry how we have used our credit and influence among men, may not the players have to allege, that by your attendance, they were countenanced in the exercise of a profession which must be allowed to be highly unfavorable to their future happiness? May not the same be said by some unguarded young people, who, forgetting the Scripture precept to avoid the beginnings of evil, there yielded to propensities, and formed connections, and acquired habits, which terminated in a dissolution of the moral principle, and finally in their irrevocable ruin?

“Yet, after all this, as I have the highest sense of the duty of obeying a mother’s commands, and of gratify-

ing a mother's wishes, I can not, if my mother makes a point of it, absolutely advise you not to give way ; but I know my mother too well not to be assured, that whatever she may have said or thought upon the first suggestion, she will not make a point of it on more cool deliberation. Sensible as I am of the integrity of her mind and the force of her affection, I am convinced she would not insist on it, or press it more strongly, but under the idea of your not suffering from the compliance ; whereas, I am equally convinced it would be a source of lasting uneasiness to you. I trust my dear mother will do justice to the motives which have compelled me thus to express myself, for I would not conceal from her what I have said to you. I shall be extremely anxious to know how she feels, and how you determine. \* \* \* \* \* O my dearest sister ! how glorious a change it will be, if ever we all meet beyond the reach of all those chances and accidents to which we are exposed in this uncertain state of existence, and with hearts overflowing with gratitude toward that Saviour who so loved us that He gave himself for us, to suffer death upon the cross : if we enter into the possession of that happiness which knows no limit of degree or duration ; and may our connections be so formed, as to be thus continued beyond the grave, that with those whom we most affectionately regard and value, we may dwell forever, where there is fullness of joy, and pleasures for evermore ! May God Almighty bless you, my dearest sister, and calm and tranquillize your mind here, and conduct you to happiness hereafter !” After the lapse of a few years, we find him thus again addressing her, in lines of affectionate though earnest advice, on a point on which, as in this instance, his sister apprehended a difference

from their mother's views: "My judgment is decidedly and strongly in favor of your taking an early dinner on Sunday, and going to church in the afternoon. I can not think my mother will have any objection, but rather conceive she will be glad to be of your party. I don't say it lightly, I believe the contempt into which the Sabbath has fallen, bids fair to accelerate the ruin both of Church and State, more than any other single circumstance whatever, and it is the bounden duty of every friend to our civil happiness, no less than to our religious interests, to hold up its authority. Now, what a scandalous breach of it is the formally and systematically sitting down to dinner at the hour when public worship commences; what a host of servants, etc., are kept unavoidably away. Remember that all absenting from church begins, and is generally defended, by saying, that one may read the service at home. There is no duty more solemnly and positively, and scarce any more frequently, enjoined on us than that of *publicly honoring the name and service of God*. But I will not enter on a recital of my premises, which I have not leisure or eyesight to put down. My conclusion is clear, and that I hope will satisfy you. Only, let me guard you against thinking there will be any singularity in this. It is one of those things wherein duty is so obvious and binding, that in doing it there can be little exertion; in leaving it undone, great blame. I must lay down my pen, but I will say a word or two to that part of your letter wherein you express a doubt whether *we* are not too strict, to which I can say for myself most sincerely, not half strict enough, at least in practice. But the matter may be brought to one short issue, as far as the Buxton and Battersea systems are in question. Do the

Burtonians differ from us? I hate to speak of myself or of others. I will put the sentiment in another shape. If I see people earnestly pursuing their future happiness, though I may think by a wrong road, they seem to me to deserve to be distinguished widely from those who are evidently giving themselves no concern about the matter. If an eternity of happiness or misery be dependent on the manner of spending this life, indifference is insanity. They who argue for a more relaxed system will hardly say they expect to be happier hereafter than if they were more strict; all at least I have heard from them in general is, that they think they are strict enough to secure their safety. We do not act so in matters of temporal interest. A man would be thought a fool who, having the whole of Europe wherein to choose his residence, should plant himself within such a distance from a pest-house, as he and some other unthinking people held sufficient for his safety, though the wiser and better of his friends told him he was in hourly danger of infection. I will not refer you to Doddridge and Witherspoon, and Walker, but to Barrow and Tillotson and Taylor.\* St. Paul surely would have been thought far advanced on the Christian road, yet he says: 'Forgetting the things which are behind, and reaching forth unto the things which are before, I press toward the mark,' etc. May it please God, my dear sister, for Christ's sake, to make you abound more and more in every good work. May your heart be comforted, your views cleared, your love strengthened, your faith confirmed. *Here*, indeed, I believe, (for I have the declaration from the best of men,) we must ever groan, being burdened. Alas!

\* And we may add, the Pastoral Letter of our own House of Bishops.

what cause have I for groaning ; but let us wait on God, with continual prayers for the influence of His blessed spirit, to render us daily fitter for a better world, where all sin as well as all sorrow shall cease for ever." The subject of this letter was one on which, at every period of his religious life, his views were very decided, and his habits entirely conformed to his judgment of what was right. Thus, in writing to a friend, he says : "There is nothing in which I would recommend you to be more strictly resolute than in keeping the Sabbath holy ; and by this I mean not only abstaining on that day from all unbecoming sports, and common business, but from consuming time in frivolous conversation, paying or receiving visits, which, among relations, often leads to a sad waste of this precious day. These are practices which have their source in an inadequate sense of the value of a season in which we may lawfully neglect our ordinary occupations, and consequently addict ourselves without interruption to religious offices. Self-examination and much private prayer should never be omitted on this day ; and I have found it very useful to walk out and admire the beauties of nature, and raise my mind to a consideration of the wisdom and power and goodness of God. I can truly declare to you, that, to me, the institution of the Sabbath has been invaluable. I need not suggest, likewise, the duty of searching into our hearts on that day ; examining ourselves as to our love of God and of Christ, and purging out all malice and ill-will toward any one who may have offended us ; trying, likewise, where opportunity offers, to make peace. In all we should ever associate the idea of our blessed Master, and endeavor to render him as much as possible present to our minds. I have learned from

experience that, if our acquaintance see that we are resolute in our determination to keep the Lord's day holy, they will, after a while, at least, leave us to ourselves, and even respect us more for adhering to the dictates of our own principles."

## CHAPTER VI.

His feeble health caused him to seek the advice of Mr. Hey of Leeds, one of those individuals of lofty position, who adorn by their Christian graces the high rank to which their character has elevated them in the estimation of their fellow-men. No name stands higher than that of Hey, on that scroll emblazoned with the name of worthy sons which adorns the glorious temple of medical science. None will be more honored in that day when the good and faithful servants of the Lord shall enter into his joy. While seeking his advice, Wilberforce was domesticated with the family, of which he says: "A family that really appears to be serving God. Happy people!" After leaving Mr. Hey, Mr. W. wrote to Lord Muncaster: "Frequent conversations with him have impressed me with an opinion of his skill. He does not express himself over-confidently, for which I like him the better; but he says, I may reasonably hope that by perseverance in the plan which he recommends, I shall gradually recover health and strength; in both which he thinks I have suffered by living too low, and he advises a strict adherence to meat and wine, as the most trusty and effectual restoratives. \* \* \* \* Another part of his direction is, that I shall try with caution the Bath water, and this I shall possibly do before the meeting

of Parliament, though my motions are somewhat uncertain, for they will depend somewhat on the state in which I find poor Eliot and Pitt. I well know how feelingly you have sympathized with them. I do not believe there ever existed between brother and sister a more affectionate attachment, than between Pitt and Lady Harriet. Public business, however, will be an assistance to him in getting over the shock, by necessarily calling him from his own melancholy reflections; but I fear it will go hard with Eliot, whose natural temper is ill calculated to bear up against such a stroke. If either of them should be in such a state as that I should think my company would be of material service, I shall dedicate myself to this employment; if otherwise, to King Bladud.\*

“O my dear Muncaster! how can we go on as if present things were to last forever, when so often reminded ‘that the fashion of this world passes away!’ Every day I live I see greater reason in considering this life but as a passage to another. And when summoned to the tribunal of God, to give an account of all things we have done in the body, how shall we be confounded by the recollection of those many instances, in which we have relinquished a certain eternal for an uncertain transitory good! You are not insensible to these things, but you think of them rather like a follower of Socrates than a disciple of Jesus. You see how frankly I deal with you; in truth I can no otherwise so well show the interest I take in your happiness. These thoughts are uppermost in my heart, and they will come forth when I do not repress my natural emotions. Oh! that they had a more prevailing influence over my disposition and conduct; then might I hope to

\* The tutelary genius of Bath.



afford men occasion 'to glorify our Father which is in heaven;' and I should manifest the superiority of the principle which actuated me, by the more than ordinary spirit and activity by which my parliamentary, my domestic, and all my other duties were marked and characterized."

Lady Harriet Eliot, to whose death he thus refers, was the daughter of the Earl of Chatham, sister of Mr. Pitt, and wife of Mr. Eliot. She died at this juncture, and gave opportunity for a lively display of Mr. Wilberforce's readiness to sacrifice to the comfort of his friends his own purposes, even for the improvement of his health. We soon after find him at Bath, schooling his heart as carefully in the crowded scenes of that place of fashionable resort as he had done in the seclusion of Wilford.

"I am too apt," he says, Nov. 18th, "to be considering how far I may advance towards sin, in animal indulgences particularly; not remembering that a Christian's life is hid with Christ in God, that he ought to have more satisfaction in offering the little sacrifices God requires, as the willing tribute of a grateful heart, than in gratifying fleshly appetites; and that he should look for his happiness in fellowship with God, and view with jealousy whatever tends to break in on this communion. I am apt to be thinking it enough to spend so many hours in reading, religious service, study, etc. What a sad sign is this! how different from that delight in the law and service of God in the inner man, which St. Paul speaks of, and which was so eminent in David! O my God! for the sake of Thy beloved Son, our propitiation, through whom we may have access to the throne of grace, give me a new heart—give me a real desire and earnest longing for one. I have got

a trick of congratulating myself when I look at my watch, or the clock strikes: 'Well, one hour more of this day is gone.' What ingratitude is this to God, who spares this cumberer of the ground from day to day, to give him time for repentance!" "Walk charitably," he writes down as his law; "wherever you are, be on your guard, remembering that your conduct and conversation may have some effect on the minds of those with whom you are, in rendering them more or less inclined to the reception of Christian principles, and the practice of a Christian life. Be ready with subjects for conversation, for private thought, as Watts and Doddridge recommend. This week to find opportunities for opening to M. B., and to endeavor to impress her deeply with a sense of the importance of the one thing needful, and to convince her that the loose religion and practice of common professors is not the religion and practice of the Bible."

Mr. Hey was one from whom he obtained not only medical advice, but whom he took into the number of his friends and counsellors, and we accordingly find him entering into correspondence with him, on a subject, which, at this time, and for many years after, occupied a large share of his thoughts and attention. Mingling extensively in the society of the highest rank; thrown by his political connections into equally close contact with those who follow the example of their superiors readily, when in correspondence with the cravings of their own corrupt nature; he saw himself surrounded by the evidences that the evil which he lamented in himself, and of which he so earnestly repented, and from the guilt of which he so humbly sought pardon, and freedom from its power through the mercy of his Redeemer, was equally operative in the multitudes of his

fellow-men. His warm affections were moved by the conviction, that from the highest to the lowest ranks, there was a general relaxation of morals, which it was necessary to correct, and he determined to attempt the formation of an association for the purpose of promoting a reformation of manners. To Mr. Hey he says, speaking of a previous organization, the object of which had been first, the mutual edification of its members, and then the resistance of the spread of open immorality: "I am conscious that ours is an infinitely inferior aim, yet surely it is of the utmost consequence, and worthy of the labors of a whole life." John Wesley, though closely connected with the upper classes by birth, had devoted himself, with unrivalled assiduity, to the spiritual improvement of the poor. Wilberforce, a layman, aspired to the task of bringing his influence, as such, to bear upon every class in the same calling. In his journal, he remarks: "God has set before me as my object, the reformation of manners," and in this feeling of a high commission he devoted himself zealously to the execution of its purpose. To one of his parliamentary friends he writes: "The barbarous custom of hanging has been tried too long, and with the success which might have been anticipated from it. The most effectual way to prevent the greater crimes is by punishing the smaller, and by endeavoring to repress that general spirit of licentiousness which is the parent of every species of vice. I know, that by regulating the external conduct, we do not at first change the hearts of men, but even they are ultimately to be wrought upon by these means, and we should at least so far remove the obtrusiveness of the temptation, that it may not provoke the appetite which might otherwise lie dormant and inactive."

The plan he proposed was, to procure a royal proclamation against vice and immorality, and then to engage the coöperation of voluntary associations for the purpose of enforcing its observance. He felt it important to procure the active friendship of the Bishops to this plan, and to induce them to promote it by becoming members of the Association; and in order to effect this, he determined to visit as many of them as possible on the adjournment of Parliament, at their respective sees. This he thought preferable to drawing their attention to it while in London, lest the hesitation of a few might influence others, and defeat his plan. So soon, therefore, as the proclamation was issued, instead of resorting to Bath for the benefit of the waters, as he had been advised to do by Mr. Hey, he visited in succession the residences of many of the Bishops, and secured them as promoters of the scheme. He also called by the way on many influential laymen, from some of whom he received countenance in his effort, while others were lukewarm or hostile. One nobleman said to him: "So you wish, young man, to be a reformer of men's morals. Look, then," pointing as he spoke to a picture of the Crucifixion, "and see there what is the end of such reformers!" Mr. Eliot, brother-in-law of the minister, with a spirit chastened and subdued by the sore affliction through which he had passed, and by it made ready to receive the glad tidings of the Gospel, joined him zealously, and labored long as one of the active Committee men of the Central Society. The entire summer was devoted to this object by Mr. Wilberforce, who enlisted among its members and promoters many of the most influential men in the kingdom. Nor was his labor in vain. It was valuable, not only for the purpose for which it was established, but became the cen-

tre from which many other useful schemes emanated, and was the first example of those various associations which soon succeeded to the apathy which had long marked the English Church. A short tour in Devonshire, in the autumn, was followed by a sojourn at Bath, where he formed the acquaintance, soon ripening into friendship, of one associated permanently with his memory by earnest association of purpose in all their several plans for usefulness—Hannah More. “I find here,” she writes at this time, “a great many friends; but those with whom I have chiefly passed my time are Mr. Wilberforce’s family. That young gentleman’s character is one of the most extraordinary I ever knew for talent, virtue, and piety. It is difficult not to grow wiser and better every time one converses with him.”

It was at this juncture, and under the same influence as led him to the formation of the Society for the Reformation of Manners, that Wilberforce first entered publicly on the great undertaking with which his name has been so long and so indissolubly associated. The attention of many persons in various parts of England was simultaneously, or nearly so, aroused to the consideration of the condition of the negro slaves in the West-India Islands, and through that to the horrors of the trade by which those islands were supplied with slaves. The honor of being first mover in the action which was instituted has been claimed—and it is needless to enter into the discussion of the merit of the respective claims—for many. Lady Middleton was deeply moved by the statements of a Rev. Mr. Ramsay, who had resided in the West-Indies. and having appealed to her husband, Sir Charles Middleton, afterward Lord Barham, as a member of Parliament to invite attention to the subject, he, well aware that the trade had become so important in a pecuniary

point of view, that any attempt to interrupt it would excite great opposition, realized the necessity of great caution in the attempt to arrest it, and of seeking for the aid of some one of more extensive influence than his own, though ready to support it with all his power. He accordingly solicited the assistance of Wilberforce, whose high moral and religious character, eloquence, and intimacy with Pitt, untrammelled by the bonds which would have restrained one less independent, all pointed out as one especially adapted to the post of leader in so momentous a question. The Society of Friends, Granville Sharp, a London merchant, and Thomas Clarkson, were all earnestly engaged in furthering the great and glorious enterprise, by collecting testimony as to the character of the trade and the miseries it entailed on its victims, and by exciting the sympathies of British Christians for them. But to William Wilberforce Providence had assigned the distinguished post he so ably, so undauntedly, so perseveringly occupied, and for which he had been qualified by his previous training in parliamentary action, as well as by the early interest he had taken in the subject of Lady Middleton's application. Mr. Wilberforce has said: "It was just one of these many impulses which were all giving to my mind the same direction." And, "It is somewhat worthy of attention, as indicative of the providential impulses by which we are led into particular lines of conduct, that as early as the year 1780, (when only twenty-one years old,) I had been strongly interested for the West-Indian slaves, and in a letter asking my friend Gordon, then going to Antigua, to collect information for me, I expressed my determination, or at least my hope, that some time or other I should redress the wrongs of those wretched and de-

graded beings." That his motives in entering finally on the undertaking in the year 1786 were still loftier and nobler than even the warm sympathies of his boyhood, is due to the change of character which had meanwhile been wrought by the power of the Holy Ghost, and which, while it set him free from every thing that was corrupt and evil in its origin or tendencies, communicated its own heavenly character to all that he undertook. Thus he says: "God Almighty has set before me two great objects—the suppression of the slave-trade, and the reformation of manners." It was with the earnestness which properly belonged to such motives, that he entered on his duties, seeking information on the subject from every available source, not overlooking or undervaluing that to be procured from West-India proprietors and African merchants themselves, whom at this time he "found ready to give him information freely; the trade not having yet become the subject of alarming discussion. These accounts," he says, "were full of prejudice and error." When he had acquired, he says, "so much information, I began to talk the matter over with Pitt and Grenville. Pitt recommended me to undertake its conduct as a subject suited to my character and talents." "At length, I well remember, after a conversation in the open air at the root of an old tree at Holwood, (Pitt's residence,) just above the steep descent into the vale of Keston, I resolved to give notice, on a fit occasion, in the House of Commons, of my intention to bring the subject forward." His public avowal of this determination was followed by the organization of a meeting, held on the 12th of May, 1787, composed of twelve London merchants, all but two of whom were members of the Society of Friends, for the purpose of raising funds, and collecting the in-

formation necessary to prove the propriety of this motion for the abolition of the trade. His efforts in this cause were not confined to those put forth in the House of Commons, and among his friends at home, but realizing thus early the advantage, nay, necessity of foreign coöperation, he contemplated a journey to France, hoping that the friendly relations then existing between the new Government there and that of St. James, might lead to some combined action on the subject. Mr. (afterward Lord) Grenville was solicited to join him; but after consultation with Mr. Pitt, the project was abandoned. The intimacy of Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Pitt at this time was very close, so that they were almost daily companions; but this and all his other social intercourse, which was very extensive, was made subservient to the one object. Just, however, as the critical moment arrived when, after the examination of witnesses before the Privy Council, the consummation of all his arrangements indicated that the time for his motion had arrived, it seemed but too probable to those who were most interested in the welfare of Mr. Wilberforce, as well as in the object itself, that he would be withdrawn forever, not only from the eminent position he occupied as the parliamentary leader in this business, but from all participation whatever in any business. His efforts thus far had all been made in despite of the naturally feeble constitution, to which reference has been made already; but in the spring of 1788 his health appeared about to fail entirely. On the last day of January, he says, in his diary, after many previous entries of indifferent health: "Very unwell; so did not dine at Pitt's; but met Ramsay (on the slave question) there in the evening, and discussed. Did not go to House." During several consecutive days he makes similar en-



tries; and though the urgent symptoms seemed then to subside, toward the end of February we find him under medical treatment, and chiefly confined to the house, till on the 8th of March he writes to a friend: "Thank God! I am now recovering, and I trust a little relaxation, on which my physician insists, and Bath waters, will restore me again to the duties of my station." On this very day, however, his disease returned with renewed violence. His disorder assumed the character of an entire decay of all the vital functions. One college friend, directing the attention of another to his wasted frame, said: "There is Wilberforce, he can not last three weeks. A consultation of the chief physicians of the day resulted in the declaration to his family, "that he had not stamina to last a fortnight." "Judging the case to be beyond the skill of the masters of human art," (say his sons,) "they decently dismissed their patient on a journey to the Bath waters. He complied with their desire; but soberly forecasting the doubtful issue of his disease, he first summoned Mr. Pitt, and obtained from him a promise that he would charge himself with the interests of the Abolition cause." On the 5th of April he reached Bath in a state of extreme weakness and exhaustion. Here he continued four weeks, during which time he was compelled to be a mere spectator of the progress of the cause with which his existence was identified. As his health gradually improved under the treatment recommended by his medical advisers, he left Bath for Cambridge, where he resided in rooms in St. John College, "living more regularly and quietly than he had done in a long while—chiefly Milner in the evening." Throughout this return to academic life, he experienced much gratification in the society of Dean Milner, and a few others of his ordinary companions;

yet he remarks of the general tone of their society: "They were not what I had expected. They had neither the solidity of judgment possessed by ordinary men of business, nor the refined feelings and elevated principles which became a studious and sequestered life." Of himself, he remarks, at the same period: "I am too easily contented with a general impression of religion, and do not labor to perfect faith by habituating myself to act upon a principle of love. I scarcely dare resolve after so many defeats, but I trust I shall do better, relying entirely for success upon the assistance of that Holy Spirit which we are promised." From Cambridge, he went into Westmoreland, and once more settled himself at Rayrigg, in his old residence, where Pitt promised to visit him. The pressure of public business defeated this arrangement. But though disappointed of this, his house was thronged the whole summer by a succession of guests. This mode of life proved necessarily an interruption to his usual habits, and caused him to lament deeply the want of that privacy and communion with God, to which he was wont to resort for refreshment of soul, even in the periods of greatest pressure of business. He pours forth grievous lamentations over his declension in spirituality, and the "indolence and intemperance" into which it betrayed him. "Though I have so often resolved, and broken my resolutions, that I am almost ready to acquiesce in the headlong course that I am pursuing; yet as thus to acquiesce would be to consign myself to irreversible misery, I must still strive to loose myself from this bondage of sin and Satan, calling on the name of the Lord, who alone can make my endeavors effectual. I am this week entering on a scene of great temptation—a perpetual round of dissipation—and my house over-

flowing with guests. It is the more necessary for me to live by the faith of the Son of God. Do Thou, then, Thou blessed Saviour and friend of sinners, hear, and have mercy upon me. Let Thy strength be magnified in my weakness. But whatever be the issue of this residence at Rayrigg, may it be a useful lesson to teach me to form my plans hereafter with greater caution and circumspection, and not to run myself into temptations, from the evil of which he who voluntarily exposes himself to them can not reasonably expect to be delivered. I will now form, and note in my pocket-book, such resolutions for this week's regulation as are best adapted to my present circumstances; and do Thou, O God! enable me to keep them. My general object during my stay at this place should be to guard against habits of idleness, luxury, selfishness, and forgetfulness of God, by interlacing as much as I can of reading and meditation, and religious retirement and self-examination. Let me constantly view myself, in all my various relations :

“As one who professes to be a Christian.

“As a member of Parliament.

“As gifted by Nature and fortune, as a son, as a brother, pater familias, friend, with influence and powerful connections.

“1. To be for the ensuing week moderate at table.

“2. Hours as early as can contrive. Redeeming the time.”

The experience of this summer led him to determine to abandon this place of residence; the numerous visitors attracted thither by the exquisite lake scenery causing it to be too much frequented to permit him any retirement. He therefore gave up his house at the close of his lease, before another summer's resort to it should

subject him to the same violation of a sense of duty, as appears to have given him much disturbance of conscience this year. To Bath he again resorted at the close of the summer; but while there received a letter from the Rev. C. Wyvill, who says:

"I have for some time deferred mentioning to you the intended jubilee at York upon the 5th of November. But it is now so near, that I can no longer delay to communicate my opinion that your appearance at so great a meeting of your friends as will then be held at York is absolutely necessary, so that nothing short of inability to move without endangering your health ought to prevent it.

"Your absence from this meeting would be peculiarly prejudicial, because many would be apt to consider it a proof of excessive scrupulosity. On this topic your antagonists have not been wanting in their endeavors to hurt you; but if you embrace this opportunity of meeting your constituents, and show them you are exactly the same person whose cause they lately espoused with so much zeal, these hostile attempts will be unsuccessful. It is surely possible to mix in such assemblies with innocence and decency."

"Were I to attempt," he answers, "to show my constituents this, it would be an attempt to impose upon them, which nothing should induce me to practice, and which I am sure you would be the last man in the world to recommend. Except in the personal regard and gratitude to my friends, which were then so strong that I dare not say they are increased, I can not (I speak to you what addressed to another would be arrogant, but what in speaking to you it would be worse than affectation to withhold) I can not say that I am by any means the same person. I can assert with truth that I have a

higher sense of the duties of my station, and a firmer resolution to discharge them with fidelity and zeal; but it is also true that I am under many restraints as to my conduct to which I was not then subject, and that my religious opinions are very different. Not that I would shut myself up from mankind and immure myself in a cloister. My walk, I am sensible, is a public one; my business is in the world; and I must mix in assemblies of men, or quit the post which Providence seems to have assigned me. I entirely agree with you, 'one may mix in these assemblies with decency and innocence.' But the point is, whether by confining myself within these limits I should be likely to advance my interests with my constituents. They certainly, I trust, will not believe that I am so over-rigid as to condemn the cheerfulness of the social board when kept within the bounds of sobriety and decency, however diligently my enemies may circulate reports to my disadvantage; but this would not be enough to remove the impression in question, if it were acting honestly to endeavor to remove it. No! for this purpose would it not be requisite for me to drink and sing, etc., as I used to do? You, being a clergyman, can not draw any inferences from your own case to mine; nothing of the sort I object to is expected from you."

He deemed it, however, right to obey the summons.

"27th of October. Left Bath for London on my way to York to attend the jubilee.—Whilst at Bath grew much better."

## CHAPTER VII.

THE illness and mental derangement of King George III. at this period caused great alarm and agitation throughout the entire kingdom ; and compelled Wilberforce to leave Bath, (to which place he returned after having met his constituents at York,) and devote himself anew to the performance of his public duties.

To one whose past habits and present occupation were of a desultory character, few things would be more useful, or more difficult, than to note down accurately the mode in which his time was spent. Such an account he now commenced, and continued resolutely until his studious habits were matured ; and if in after-life he perceived any relaxation in his diligence, he immediately resumed the practice.

To "live by rule," was his object ; nor was it only over the employment of his time that he diligently watched. To those who knew the clear serenity of his later life, it may be matter of surprise to hear that his sky was ever overcast by storms. It is a most encouraging reflection that this peace was the result of previous contests. For though at this time most strictly temperate, and inclined in the judgment of his fellows to abstemiousness rather than excess, he was himself sensible of many struggles before his body was brought under that "sober government" which renders it the

meetest instrument of the renewed spirit. He was not laboring to reduce intemperate habits within the limits of that self-indulgent propriety which contents the generality of men. From this point he started; but aiming at a higher standard, he sought to live a life of mortification in the midst of luxury. It was his object to gain such control over his lower nature, that it should never impede his usefulness in social intercourse, or clog the freedom of his communings with God. His diary affords many instances of these contentions with himself, upon which he entered, not without some indignation at discovering their necessity. "Surely these are not little things, health depends upon them, and duty on health." "They are not little things if my health and power of serving God be a great one." Perceiving that his difficulties arose from carelessness as much as self-indulgence, he sought to counteract it by laying down a set of rules too minutely practical to bear insertion here—while not content with recording against himself every infraction of these severe regulations, he had recourse to another expedient to keep his vigilance awake. "M. and I made an agreement to pay a guinea forfeit when we broke our rules, and not to tell particulars to each other. I hope this will be an instrument under divine grace to keep me from excess. When once a settled habit is formed, less rigid rules will be necessary." "Exceeded, and determined to pay forfeit. Went on rather better, yet by no means up to the strictness of my plan." "Nothing is to be resisted more than the disposition which we feel when we have been long striving unsuccessfully for any particular grace, or against any habitual infirmity, to acquiesce in our low measure of that grace, or in the presence of that infirmity, so as not to feel shame, humiliation, and compunc-

tion. We are not to cast off the hope of getting better of the one and attaining to the other. This is the very state in which we are to work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. The promise is sure in the end. Therefore, though it tarry, wait for it; it will surely come, it will not tarry."

At this period, as well as throughout the subsequent years of his life, his diary abounds with notices of the delight with which he hailed the tranquil pursuits and joys of the Lord's day, which he ever spent in the quiet communion of soul with God, in the hours which were not devoted to public worship or instruction, except in a few instances, when the emergency of public duties of a sacred character appeared to him to justify a departure from the rigid observance of the letter of the law.

"25th, Sunday. Heard Mr. Wood—with Eliot. Blessed be God, who hath appointed these solemn returns of the day of rest to remind us of those most important realities, of which we grow forgetful amidst the hurry of business and the vanities of the world."

And on another occasion he enters on his diary: "Refused to go to Holwood (the residence of Pitt) that I might have Sunday quiet." "Often in my visits to Holwood, (he has said in conversation,) when I heard one or another speak of this man's place, or that man's peerage, I felt a rising inclination to pursue the same objects; but a Sunday in solitude never failed to restore me to myself."

"Sunday. Eliot and Henry Thornton. Lock—Scott excellent on St. James 5 : 7, 8. Much affected with the discourse. Oh! blessed be God, who hath appointed the Sabbath, and interposes these seasons of serious recollection. May they be effectual to their purpose; may



my errors be corrected, my desires sanctified, and my whole soul quickened and animated in the Christian course. The last week has been spent little, if at all, better than the preceding ; but I trust God will enable me to turn to Him in righteousness. Write, I beseech Thee, Thy law in my heart, that I may not sin against Thee. I often waste my precious hours for want of having settled beforehand to what studies to betake myself, what books to read. Let me attend to this for the time to come, and may my slave business, and my society business be duly attended to."

" March 1st, Sunday. Eliot breakfasted and Lock—Scott. Called Lord Chatham's about politics, (a work of real necessity.) Strongly and deeply affected by an examination of myself, I would hope to good purpose, and resolved to change my habits of life. This perpetual hurry of business and company ruins me in soul if not in body. I must make a thorough reform. More solitude and earlier hours—diligence—proper distribution and husbandry of time—associating with religious friends; this will strengthen my weakness by the blessing of God." "On an impartial examination of my state, I see that the world is my snare; business and company distract my mind and dissipate those serious reflections which alone can preserve us from infection in such a situation of life as mine, where these antidotes are ever wanted to prevent our falling victims to this moral contagion. My error hitherto has been, I think, endeavoring to amend this and the other failing, instead of striking at the root of the evil. Let me, therefore, make a spirited effort, not trusting in myself, but in the strength of the Lord God. Let me labor to live a life of faith, and prayer, and humility, and self-denial, and heavenly-mindedness, and sobriety, and dil-

igence. Let me labor this week in particular, and lay down for myself a course of conduct. Yet let not this be mainly on my mind, but the fear and love of my Maker and Redeemer. Oh! that the blessed day may come when, in the words of St. Paul, I may assert of myself that my conversation is in heaven; that the life I now lead in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me." "I trust I can say in the presence of God that I do right in going into company, keeping up my connections, etc. Yet as it is clear, from a thorough examination of myself, that I require more solitude than I have had of late, let me henceforth enter upon a new system throughout. Rules—As much solitude and sequestration as are compatible with duty. Early hours night and morning. Abstinence as far as health will permit. Regulation of employments for particular times. Prayer three times a day at least, and begin with serious reading or contemplation. Self-denial in little things. Slave trade my main business now."

After having been engaged many months in sifting and arranging the evidence which had been collected on the slave trade, the question was brought before the House on the 12th of May, 1789. He says in his diary: "Came to town sadly unfit for work; but by divine grace was enabled to make my motion so as to give satisfaction. Spoke three hours and a half. I had not prepared my language or even gone over all the matter; but being well acquainted with the whole subject, I got on. My heart sore, but de ceteris pretty well. How ought I to labor, if it pleases God to enable me to impress people with a persuasion that I am serious, and to incline them to agree with me!" The effect of this speech of three hours and more is described by

the comments on it by Burke, who said, "that the House, the nation, and Europe, were under great and serious obligations to the honorable gentleman for having brought forward the subject in a manner the most masterly, impressive and eloquent." "The principles," he said, "were so well laid down, and supported with so much force and order, that it equalled any thing he had heard in modern times, and was not perhaps to be surpassed in the remains of Grecian eloquence."

Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox were no less loud in their eulogies; and the following character of the speech from a witness of a different order, is an interesting testimony to its effect. Bishop Porteus writes on the 13th of May to the Rev. W. Mason: "It is with heartfelt satisfaction I acquaint you that Mr. Wilberforce yesterday opened the important subject of the Slave Trade in the House of Commons, in one of the ablest and most eloquent speeches that was ever heard in that or any other place. It continued upwards of three hours, and made a sensible and powerful impression upon the House. He was supported in the noblest manner by Mr. Pitt, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Fox, who all agreed in declaring that the Slave Trade was the disgrace and opprobrium of this country, and that nothing but entire abolition could cure so monstrous an evil. It was a glorious night for this country. I was in the House from five to eleven."

His diary, during the succeeding months, abounds in evidence of his untiring assiduity in prosecuting every plan which promised any assistance to the great object of his anxiety, and exhibits also the same diligent self-examination, as to motives and actions, which enabled him to attain to such simplicity of character as he ever displayed. While the just demands of his friends on

his time were always honored, he ever laments the little benefit he conferred on others, or received himself from extensive social intercourse. Notwithstanding the evident difficulties which were then agitating France, he proposed at this time again going to Paris personally in order to interest the government in the abolition of the slave trade, but was ultimately led to believe it was better to send Mr. Clarkson, who would not be so much an object of public attention, and would, therefore, be less likely to awaken jealousy than himself, connected, as he was known to be, with Mr. Pitt. Writing to a friend at this time, he says: "Panting after a little solitude and quiet, as you must perceive me to be, from what I have been just throwing out, does it not seem a most preposterous determination to which I am come, of spending some time in and about Paris? Yet such is my plan, and I purpose to cross the water in a very few days. You will readily conceive that though the present state of politics in that quarter is justly interesting, to the highest degree, I am not attached solely or moved chiefly by that consideration. This is professed to the million, but the slave business is mainly in my view, and I do not feel myself at liberty to decline any path wherein I see a probability, however faint, of forwarding this great object." The necessity for inducing France to join in the abolition of the slave trade was manifest, as it was urged by those who opposed the action of the British Parliament on that subject, that the trade, with all its emoluments, would at once accrue to the rival nation, while no benefit would be conferred on the negro. This argument was continually advanced by the opponents of the measure. Mr. Clarkson entered zealously on the discharge of the duties of his mission, and wrote to Wilberforce:

"La Fayette has undertaken to propose the abolition in the National Assembly, which would probably, as soon as he ceased speaking, carry the question by acclamation." "I entreat you to write to Mons. La Fayette: he has absolutely a greater respect for you than for any other person in the English nation." Despite, however, of the sanguine hopes entertained by Mr. Clarkson, the action of the Assembly, which he hoped for and expected, was never accomplished, and the close of the session of Parliament, while it set Wilberforce at liberty from his duties in the House, left him still earnestly engaged in the objects to which he had solemnly dedicated himself. We find him mingling with the society of his own class, because he felt himself called to a mission which could in no other way be performed, though his taste, and his conviction of the injurious influence upon his own soul of general society, would have led him to a very different career. Thus, on one day, we find him entering in his journal: "Obliged to dine with S., to meet Duchess of Gordon, Chatham, and P. Arden. How ill these meetings suit my state of mind, and how much do they incapacitate me for the exercises of religion! and what wrong notions of my real character do they lead to! I must abstract more, and live more by myself. I am too much conformed to this world. I ought not to aim at this; it is too dangerous for one so weak in the faith as I am. Let me endeavor to withdraw myself, and find my pleasure in the testimony of my conscience." And the next day: "Came off to Teston, to see the Middletons and Mrs. Bouverie. How much better is this society! I will endeavor to confine myself more to those who fear God." After much struggling to release himself from the claims upon him of Pitt, and other friends

of congenial tastes and pursuits in all other things than that one needful one which was nearest to his heart, and to whom he was bound by long continued and close intimacy, he set off for Bath, where he met again with Hannah More and Mr Henry Thornton, of whom he remarks: "A most excellent, pure, upright and generous young man. May it please God to continue him a blessing to the public, and to amend his health." The friendship with Hannah More was one which his increasing desire of intercourse with those who feared God led him especially at this time to cultivate. There was no part of Mrs. H. More's character which he regarded with greater admiration than her active usefulness in the retirement of the country. "I was once," he said, "applied to by a Yorkshire clergyman, who desired me to assist him in obtaining a dispensation for non-residence upon his cure. He had been used, he said, to live in London with the first literary circles, and now he was banished into the country, far from all intellectual society. I told him that I really could not in conscience use any influence I possessed to help him; and then I mentioned to him the case of Mrs. H. More, who in like manner had lived with Johnson, Garrick, Burke, Sir J. Reynolds, etc., and was so courted by them all, and who had a great taste for such society; and yet had broken away from its attractions, and shut up herself in the country, to devote her talents to the instruction of a set of wretched people, sunk in heathen darkness, amongst whom she was spending her time and fortune in schools and institutions for their benefit, going in all weathers a considerable distance to watch over them, until at last she had many villages and some thousands of children under her care. This is truly magnificent, the really sublime in character. I delight

to think of it, and of the estimation in which the sacrifice she made will be held in another world." "There is no class of persons," he would add, "whose condition has been more improved within my recollection than that of unmarried women. Formerly there seemed to be nothing useful in which they could be naturally busy, but now they may always find an object in attending to the poor." He enters in his diary: "Thursday, Aug. 20th. At Cowslip Green all day. 21st. After breakfast to see Cheddar. Intended to read, dine, etc., amongst the rocks, but could not get rid of the people; so determined to go back again. The rocks very fine. Had some talk with the people, and gave them something—grateful beyond measure—wretchedly poor and deficient in spiritual help. I hope to amend their state." It was this visit to Cheddar, thus simply related in Mr. Wilberforce's diary, which gave rise to Mrs. More's great exertions for her neglected neighbors. The vicar of Cheddar at that time was non-resident, and his curate, who lived nine miles off at Wells, visited the parish on Sundays only. The spiritual destitution of such a parish, seen with his own eyes, greatly affected Mr. Wilberforce. The effects which followed from his visit are thus recorded in an unpublished Journal of Mrs. Martha More:

"In the month of August, 1789, Providence directed Mr. Wilberforce and his sister to spend a few days at Cowslip Green. The cliffs of Cheddar are esteemed the greatest curiosity in those parts. We recommended Mr. W. not to quit the country till he had spent a day in surveying these tremendous works of nature. We easily prevailed upon him, and the day was fixed; but after a little reflection he changed his mind, appeared deeply engaged in some particular study, fancied time

would scarcely permit, and the whole was given up. The subject of the cliffs was renewed at breakfast; we again extolled their beauties, and urged the pleasure he would receive by going. He was prevailed on and went. I was in the parlor when he returned; and with the eagerness of vanity (having recommended the pleasure) I inquired, how he liked the cliffs? He replied, they were very fine, but the poverty and distress of the people were dreadful. This was all that passed. He retired to his apartment and dismissed even his reader. I said to his sister and mine, I feared Mr. W. was not well. The cold chicken and wine put into the carriage for his dinner were returned untouched. Mr. W. appeared at supper, seemingly refreshed with a higher feast than we had sent with him. The servant at his desire was dismissed, when immediately he began: 'Miss Hannah More, something must be done for Cheddar.' He then proceeded to a particular account of his day, of the inquiries he had made respecting the poor; there was no resident minister, no manufactory, nor did there appear any dawn of comfort, either temporal or spiritual. The method or possibility of assisting them was discussed till a late hour; it was at length decided in a few words, by Mr. W's exclaiming: 'If you will be at the trouble, I will be at the expense.' Something, commonly called an impulse, crossed my heart, that told me it was God's work, and it would do; and though I never have, nor probably shall recover the same emotion, yet it is my business to water it with watchfulness, and to act up to its then dictates. Mr. Wilberforce and his sister left us in a day or two afterwards. We turned many schemes in our head, every possible way; at length those measures were adopted which led to the foundation of the different schools."



"Resolved," he says, upon the 23d of August, "to think seriously to-day for to-morrow, my birth-day, on which I shall be much more disturbed." His more private journal thus records the thoughts to which he turned his mind. "Cowslip Green, birth-day eve. To-morrow I complete my thirtieth year. What shame ought to cover me when I review my past life in all its circumstances! With full knowledge of my Master's will, how little have I practised it! How little have I executed the purposes I formed last summer at Rayrigg! Wherein am I improved even in my intellectual powers? My business I pursue but as an amusement, and poor Ramsay (now no more) shames me in the comparison. Yet is there hope in God's mercy through Christ. May He give constancy and vigor to my resolutions. May I look ever forward to that day of account to which I am hastening; may I act as in His sight, and preserving the deepest self-abasement, may my light so shine before men, that they may see my good works, and glorify my Father which is in heaven." Though his own estimate of his exertions was thus humble, it was the surprise of others that he did so much. All his labors were performed in spite of the enfeebling presence of bodily debility. In the course of this month he wrote to Mr. Hey a full account of his present state of health. "Though by dint of medicine I have kept the enemy under, he still remains on the watch, ready to come forward in force on any favorable juncture. I am still so weak that the least irregularity disorders me; and I can not, I dare say, possess you with an adequate sense of the lassitude and internal bearing down which then oppresses me. I have still the same inability to walk any distance, much more to ride, without suffering from the exertion.

During the winter I used but little exercise, positively so called, though a London day, always bringing its toils along with it, is never a season of idleness and sloth; I went out chiefly in my carriage, and kept tolerable hours."

Mr. Hey, in replying to this letter, pressed upon him strongly the advantage he might probably derive from a course of Buxton water; and after a short time he most reluctantly followed his advice. "What have you to say," he writes in answer, "why judgment should not be pronounced against you? Thus are criminals addressed before they are consigned to their fate; and as I deem a sentence to Buxton to be in a high degree penal, the same allowance to speak in my own defense ought to be granted me in this instance. If on reconsideration the court adheres to its original opinion, I shall acquiesce, and suffer myself to be peaceably conveyed to the place of execution. Seriously speaking, after being in town for nearly eight months, I pant for retirement and the country, and feel most unwilling to plunge into the hurry of a very crowded watering-place. Yet if you believe there is a reasonable probability of my receiving benefit, I shall not hesitate to comply. I feel it to be an indispensable duty to do all I can for the perfect restoration of my health, leaving the matter with cheerful resignation in His hands, who best knows what is good for us. If I do recover strength, may He enable me to use it for His glory."

From Buxton, to which he accordingly repaired, he wrote to Mrs. Hannah More on the subject of the plans for the improvement of the condition of the poor people of Cheddar:

"MY DEAR MADAM: A letter from Cowslip Green brings with it in some sort the portraiture of its own

scenery, and greatly mends the prospect to one shut up amidst bleak, rugged hills, and barren, unprotected valleys. But it is not on this account only that yours is acceptable, but as it excites various other pleasing and refreshing images, which, having once found a place in my mind, will continue there, I trust, during the remainder of my life. May they be of still longer duration, and the benefits and the comforts of our friendship be experienced by both of us when time shall be no more. For my dear sister I must claim the same privilege, and, from what I have seen of yours, (though as this is not a case wherein one ought either to pronounce hastily, or to pay compliments, I would not absolutely decide,) I wish her also to be admitted into the confederacy. Thus much for discussion; now to business.

"Your plan is a very good one, and I think you will find no difficulty so great as that of discovering a proper couple to carry it into execution. If you can meet with any such, by all means secure them. I will desire a friend of mine to make inquiry after a doubled-headed shot fitted for doing execution in the same way, and, if successful, I shall be at no loss for an object elsewhere, against which to direct my battery. As for the expense, the best proof you can give me that you believe me hearty in the cause, or sincere in the wishes expressed in the former part of this letter, is to call on me for money without reserve. Every one should contribute out of his own proper fund. I have more money than time, and if you, or rather your sister, on whom I foresee must be devolved the superintendence of our infant establishment, will condescend to be my almoner, you will enable me to employ some of the superfluity it has pleased God to give me to good purpose. Sure I am,

that they who subscribe attention and industry, etc., furnish articles of more sterling and intrinsic value. Besides, I have a rich banker in London, Mr. H. Thornton, whom I can not oblige so much as by drawing on him for purposes like these. I shall take the liberty of inclosing a draft for £40; but this is only meant for beginning with.

"Now for the mission . . . indeed, I fear with you, nothing can be done in the regular way. But these poor people must not, therefore, be suffered to continue in their present lamentable state of darkness. You know you told me they never saw the sun but one day in the year, and even the moon appeared but once a week for an hour or two. The gravitation to Wells was too strong to be resisted. My advice then is, send for a comet—Whiston had them at command, and John Wesley is not unprovided. Take care, however, that eccentricity is not his only recommendation, and, if possible, see and converse with the man before he is determined on.

"Very much yours,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

With the Wesley family Mr. Wilberforce had formed a personal acquaintance through Mrs. More. "I went, I think in 1786, to see her, and when I came into the room, Charles Wesley rose from the table, around which a numerous party sat at tea, and coming forwards to me, gave me solemnly his blessing. I was scarcely ever more affected. Such was the effect of his manner and appearance, that it altogether upset me, and I burst into tears, unable to restrain myself."\* In recom-

\* His respect for Charles Wesley was shown in a yearly pension which he allowed to his widow until her death in 1822.

mending one of "Wesley's comets," Mr. Wilberforce had no thoughts of encouraging dissent; for John Wesley was no dissenter from the Church of England, nor were any of his preachers suffered during his lifetime to attempt to administer the sacraments of the Church. Had he not considered them as Churchmen, Mr. Wilberforce would not have suggested their employment, for in the same year he dissuaded a relation, who complained that in her place of residence she could find no religious instruction in the church, from attending at the meeting-house. "Its individual benefits," he wrote in answer to her letter of inquiry, "are no compensation for the general evils of dissent. The increase of dissenters, which always follows from the institution of unsteeped places of worship, is highly injurious to the interests of religion in the long run."

The moral desolation which he found in Cheddar was a striking illustration of his common maxim, that "the dissenters could do nothing if it were not for the Established Church;" for the absence of a resident clergyman had brought the village into a state of universal ignorance. "I have taken measures," he wrote again to Mrs. More upon the 2d of October, "to send a complete supply of the books which you desired. Your labors can only be equalled by Spenser's lady knights, and they seem to be much of the same kind too; I mean you have all sorts of monsters to cope withal." The monsters were, however, all subdued by this intrepid lady knight, supported by her generous champion, (the "Red Cross knight" was his familiar name with Mrs. Montagu,) without the eccentric succor of a "comet." "Your accounts," he writes somewhat later, "have afforded me the utmost pleasure, and I would persuade myself that they will be as comfortable next

year. I trust you will speak freely when the money is exhausted. . indeed I conceive it must be all spent already. . not to do so would be to give way either to pride, or to false delicacy."

Upon the 26th of October he left Buxton, and "set off for Yorkshire. Got to Sheffield where found River Dee Company going to dinner, so dined with them."

"27th. Off after breakfast for R., where a large party at dinner—B., the philosopher, etc. Played at cards evening, and supped. S. how little of St. Paul. F. an old man. Alas! sat up too late, and strong compunctions." After retiring to his room he wrote upon a sheet of paper: "I have been acting a part this whole evening; and whilst I have appeared easy and cheerful, my heart has been deeply troubled. That, if it should please God to call me away before to-morrow morning's light, I may not have contributed to encourage this fatal carelessness concerning the interests of futurity in never-dying souls, let me here record my sense of it, and warn all who shall read these lines, to remember that awful declaration, 'For all these things God shall call thee into judgment.'"

And some weeks later he says: "Had some very serious thoughts and strong compunctions, from which I hope good will result. Remember, O my soul! that if thou availest not thyself of these warnings, the greater will be thy condemnation. May I be enabled to place my happiness in communion with God, and may I be found in the spotless robe of Christ's righteousness, covering my iniquities from the pure eyes of a holy God. When B. dined here I was too vain and talkative, (humility should be joined to cheerfulness.) At night a long and earnest conversation with my host upon religion. May God bless it to both of us."

## CHAPTER VIII.

THOUGH his character had evidently risen in the last twelve months, yet the new year opened with strong expressions of dissatisfaction with himself—a sure consequence of aiming at an elevated standard.

“Jan. 1st. Lock—Scott—with Henry Thornton—‘These forty years in the wilderness’—received the sacrament. Most deeply impressed with serious things, shame from past life, and desire of future amendment.” “I have been receiving the sacrament after an excellent sermon of Scott’s, and with the deepest humiliation I look up for mercy, through Christ, to that God whose past mercies I have so often abused. I resolve by God’s help to mortify the flesh with the affections and lusts, so far as my very infirm health will permit me, and to labor more and more to live the life I now live in the flesh, in the faith of the Son of God. How should I be humbled by seeing the little progress I have made since 1786 !”

His intercourse with general society, “from which,” he says, “I dare not more withdraw,” and into which he endeavored to carry his high principles of action, occupied much time. His great cause alone furnished matter for unremitting toil. But besides this, he applied himself with diligence to all the important questions which were brought forward in Parliament; and was most

assiduous in his attention to the private business of the great county which he represented. "When you appear on this stage," writes Mr. James Grenville, "you must always expect to be scrambled for. The landowner, the manufacturer, the canal man, the turnpike man, and the iron man will each have a pull in his turn."

His house was continually open to an influx of men of all conditions. Pitt and his other parliamentary friends might be found there at "dinner before the House." So constant was their resort, that it was asserted, not a little to his disadvantage in Yorkshire, that he received a pension for entertaining the partisans of the minister. Once every week the "Slave Committee" dined with him. Messrs. Clarkson, Dickson, etc., jocosely named by Mr. Pitt, his "white negroes," were his constant inmates; and were employed in classing, revising, and abridging evidence under his own eye. "I can not invite you here," he writes to a friend who was about to visit London for advice, "for, during the sitting of Parliament, my house is a mere hotel." His breakfast-table was thronged by those who came to him on business; or with whom, for any of his many plans of usefulness, he wished to become personally acquainted. He took a lively interest in the Elland Society, for the education of young men for the ministry; and besides subscribing to its funds £100 per annum, (under four anonymous entries, to avoid notice,) he invited to his house the young men under education, that he might be able to distribute them in proper situations. No one ever entered more readily into sterling merit, though concealed under a rough exterior. "We have different forms," he has said, "assigned to us in the school of life—different gifts imparted. All is not attractive that is good. Iron is useful, though it does not sparkle like



the diamond. Gold has not the fragrance of a flower. So different persons have various modes of excellence, and we must have an eye to all." Yet no one had a keener or more humorous perception of the shades of character. "Mention, when you write next," says the postscript of a letter to Mr. Hey, on the announcement of a new candidate for education, "the length of his mane and tail;" and he would repeat, with a full appreciation of its humor, the answer of his Lincolnshire footman, to an inquiry as to the appearance of a recruit who presented himself in Palace Yard—"What sort of a person is he?" "O sir! he is a rough one!" The circumstances of his life brought him into contact with the greatest varieties of character. His ante-room was thronged from an early hour; its first occupants being generally invited to his breakfast-table; and its later tenants only quitting it when he himself went out on business. Like every other room in his house, it was well stored with books; and the experience of its necessity had led to the exchange of the smaller volumes, with which it was originally furnished, for cumbrous folios, "which could not be carried off by accident in the pocket of a coat." Its group was often most amusing; and provoked the wit of Mrs. H. More to liken it to "Noah's ark, full of beasts clean and unclean." On one chair sat a Yorkshire constituent, manufacturing or agricultural; on another a petitioner for charity, or a House of Commons client; on another a Wesleyan preacher; while side by side with an African, a foreign missionary, or a Haytian professor, sat perhaps some man of rank who sought a private interview, and whose name had accidentally escaped announcement. To these mornings succeeded commonly an afternoon of business, and an evening in the House of Commons.

Yet in this constant bustle he endeavored still to live by rule. "Alas!" he writes upon the 31st of January, "with how little profit has my time passed away since I came to town! I have been almost always in company, and they think me like them rather than become like me. I have lived too little like one of God's peculiar people." "Hence come waste of time, forgetfulness of God, neglect of opportunities of usefulness, mistaken impressions of my character. Oh! may I be more restrained by my rules for the future; and in the trying week upon which I am now entering, when I shall be so much in company, and give so many entertainments, may I labor doubly by a greater cultivation of a religious frame, by prayer, and by all due temperance, to get it well over."

He was much occupied in the early part of this session by the fresh application made by the dissenters for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts. Though he disliked the peculiar form of a sacramental test, yet he thought some such restriction so needful that he had voted against his friend Mr. Beaufoy when in 1787 the repeal of these enactments was demanded. In the spring of 1789, he would not leave Holwood to vote upon the question, his "mind not being made up." Since that time he had maturely weighed the subject, and to secure its full consideration he had engaged three of his friends, who took different sides upon the question, (Mr. Gisborne being for, and Mr. Hey and Mr. Mason, adverse to the repeal,) to state to him in writing the grounds of their opinions. By them the case was well argued; Mr. Hey, though a Wesleyan, showing most forcibly the necessity of an Established Church for the welfare of the nation, and the need of such enactments for the safety of the Church, while

Mr. Gisborne's letter embodied all that could be said upon the opposite side. "He suffers," I suspect, says Mr. Mason, "his liberality of spirit to carry him beyond what prudence would suggest at the present time, when Socinianism is so very prevalent. I should say, smilingly, that after having argued so well against expediency, he thinks himself now bound to set his face against every thing that may seem to be expedient." "Were you a man possessed merely of an every-day kind of conscience," writes Dr. Burgh, "I should answer your letter on the Paleian principle, and advise you by all means to vote with the dissenters, for it is surely very expedient that this county should be saved from all the evils of a contest at the next election; especially as it does not signify a rush on which side you vote as an individual; for let the question be determined in your House for the repeal of the Test Act, which I think highly improbable, the Bill will undoubtedly be flung out by the House of Lords." The debate upon the question came on in the House of Commons, upon the 3d of March, when the repeal of the restrictive acts was moved by Mr. Fox, in a speech in which he directly alluded to the opposition of the member for Yorkshire. In a correspondence with an active committee of dissenters amongst his constituents in the town of Leeds, "some garbled quotations from which," says Dr. Milner, "they have shamefully published," Mr. Wilberforce had declared that his great reluctance "to oppose the repeal of these laws had been overcome by his conviction of their present necessity." To this conviction he was brought by the persuasion, that to give such an increase of influence to the dissenting party, would endanger the Liturgy and Articles of the Church. The prevalence of loose principles of faith

amongst the body of the clergy, which had spread under the ascendancy of a latitudinarian party, had been alarmingly displayed in the petitions from the Feathers' Tavern, asking for doctrinal changes in the Liturgy to accommodate Socinian views; and the time was inauspicious for concessions which might promote the activity of dissent, or relax the strictness of orthodoxy.

"Not a day has passed," wrote Mr. Wilberforce, upon the 18th of March to Mr. Hey, "since the night of our memorable majority, (294 to 105,) wherein I have not had it in contemplation to call upon you to rejoice with me on the result of the dissenters' application. Yet the satisfaction I receive from this decision is by no means unalloyed; but I will not enter into particulars, the field would be too large at present. I was rising to speak immediately after Mr. Fox, and designed to discuss the whole subject, but Mr. Pitt desired me to give way for him; and I was myself, as well as the House, too much tired at one o'clock in the morning (I had been in it ever since eleven o'clock on the preceding day) to do more than deliver a public notification of my opinions."

The large majority by which this application was rejected, was caused by the apprehension excited by the fear of the introduction of principles which in France had led to the fearful scenes which were then enacting in that devoted country. "When I entered life," Mr. Wilberforce remarks, "it is astonishing how general was the disposition to seize on Church property. I mixed with very various circles, and I could hardly go into any company where there was not a clergyman, without having some such measure proposed. I am convinced that if the public feeling had not been al-

tered by seeing how, soon every other kind of plunder followed the destruction of tithes in France our clergy would by this time have lost their property." His main business of this session, however, was the conduct of the Abolition cause; and it was a period of excessive toil. In a letter written forty-two years later, he says:

"You can not, any more than myself, have forgotten the weeks after weeks, or rather months after months, in which our chief, though not most cherished companions, were that keen, sour S——, that ponderous, coarse, Jack Fuller-like F——; a very graphical epithet if you remember the man." His house too throughout this time was continually full. The evening hours were devoted to consultations on the common cause; and to keep so many different agents in harmonious exertion required no little management. A few extracts from his diary will illustrate these employments.

"March 18th. Dined at home—William Smith *tête-à-tête*, (partly religious;) then Clarkson came, and Muncaster, and looked over evidence. 20th. Clarkson and Eliot dined, (Slave business,) then Hunter and Sansom came from the city; a different set of ideas in their minds, and in those of our friends. 22d. Dined at home—Smith, Clarkson, and Dickson—Slave business till 11 at night. 25th. Committee as usual. 27th. Town from Clapham to committee as usual. Dined Bishop of Salisbury's—Miss More, Sir J. Bankes, Mrs. Garrick, etc. We talked of Captain Bligh's affair, and Sir Joshua (like myself) was not surprised at it—Otaheite Calypso's island. 29th. Committee—House—Captain Williams's business till 12½ at night. Not attentive enough—admired Fox and Pitt, and the law.

yers. Habit will do much, I will practise. 31st. Slave Committee—wrangling—got hold of Norris—then House till  $\frac{1}{2}$  past 10. April 1st. Committee—some wrangling—final Report. 2d. My plan of time this winter has been that of dining late, and I have seldom done any business after dinner. I doubt about this going into company so much, yet I dare not decide against it; I am too complicated in my plans. 3d. Looked over the witnesses, etc. Clarkson and Dickson dined with me. 4th. Easter Sunday. Sent to Christian to go to Lock, hoping in his present state of mind, having lately heard of his brother's conduct, an impression might, by God's blessing, be made upon him. 5th. Up to 6 $\frac{1}{2}$ —bed 12. Hard at work on Slave Trade evidence all day with 'white negroes,' two Clarksons and Dickson. 6th. Hard at work again with Clarksons and Dickson on evidence. C. Dined with us; he seems to have got over his grief too much."

On the afternoon of this day he set off, after "much doubting," to spend a single day at Holwood. "7th. Walked about after breakfast with Pitt and Grenville—wood with bills." "We sallied forth armed with bill-hooks, cutting new walks from one large tree to another, through the thickets of the Holwood copses." Yet even in these scenes of recreation, he kept a watch over himself, and rigidly noted down every instance in which he had at all neglected his task of social reformation. "Forgot my resolutions, and too little attended to opportunities of impressing seriously. Surely Pitt must deem of me as of any other man." "15th. Dined at home—Clarkson and Dickson—evidence—Beaufoy and a shoal of people came in. 16th. Breakfasted Pitt's—Sunday Bill, etc. 17th. Met Samuel Hoare at the Shakspeare Gallery—picture of Dying

Cardinal, and poor Tom Grosvenor's remark—Hoare, Sansom, Wedgewood, Granville Sharpe, Clarkson, Henry Thornton, and Whitbread, dined with me. These city people better than at our end of the town. 19th. Evidence, etc. — Saw multitudes of people on business."

These employments were soon afterwards exchanged for a hasty three weeks' canvass of the county of York, preparatory to the general election of June, 1790. In his private diary he reviews the time which had been spent in this canvass, and records his narrow escape from a serious accident, when his carriage was overturned in the village of Bessingby, near Bridlington. "The confusion of a canvass, and the change of place, have led me lately to neglect my resolution. But self-indulgence is the root of the evil: with idleness it is my besetting sin. I pray God to enable me to resist both of them, and serve him in newness of life. How little have I thought of my deliverance the other day, when the carriage was dashed to pieces! How many have been killed by such accidents, and I unhurt! Oh! let me endeavor to turn to Thee." He adds, a few days later: "I have been thinking too much of one particular failing, that of self-indulgence, whilst I have too little aimed at general reformation. It is when we desire to love God with all our hearts, and in all things to devote ourselves to His service, that we find our continual need of His help, and such incessant proofs of our own weakness, that we are kept watchful and sober, and may hope by degrees to be renewed in the spirit of our minds. Oh! may I be thus changed from darkness to light! Whatever reason there may be for my keeping open house in Palace Yard, certain it is, that solitude and quiet are favorable to reflection and to

sober-mindedness; let me therefore endeavor to secure to myself frequent seasons of uninterrupted converse with God."

The summer of 1790 was spent in excursions to Buxton and visits to his friends, during all which time, however, the letters of his friends, as well as his diary, give evidence of the constancy of his devotion to the great subject which occupied his attention.

It was about this time he was elected Steward of the York Races, and though it was apprehended by some of his friends that he placed the favor of his constituents in jeopardy, even by the tacit rebuke given by his constantly absenting himself from these scenes of amusement, he yet determined that it was his duty to express his decided disapprobation of them, and he accordingly refused to accept the office, and shortly after substituted a contribution to the county hospital for that which it was customary to make to the Races. In allusion to this subject, he remarks: "In former times, the county members displayed their equipages annually at the Races, and constituted a part of the Grand Jury at the summer assizes. The latter, indeed, I should have been glad to attend but for the unseemly festivities which commonly take place at that period: I was not, however, wanted: the number of gentlemen of large fortune in the county, was far more than sufficient to constitute a most respectable grand jury at both the spring and summer assizes. I could not consistently with my principles, frequent the theatre and ball-room, and I knew that I should give offense by staying away, if I was actually at York; but no discontent was ever expressed at my not presenting myself to the county on these occasions." By Mr. Hey's advice, in the summer of 1790 he again resorted to Buxton, but was



summoned back to London suddenly in July. In August he was again liberated, and returning to Buxton, found great delight in the company of Mr. Hey, of which he says: "I have been spending much time lately with Mr. Hey. May I profit from the example of that excellent man." And again: "Serious talk with Mr. Hey—his profitable way of spending the Sunday." And again: "Sorry to part with Hey. Whilst with him I have allotted more time to conversation. He is indeed a most instructive and profitable companion. He complains of want of love to God, but his aim is high, and his views elevated." His thoughts and feelings were at this time much occupied by the marriage of his only surviving sister to the Rev. Dr. Clarke, Vicar of Trinity Church, Hull, and he made a tour into Wales with the bridal party, and while his notes of the journey abound with indications of the pleasure he derived from the scenery, and the interest he took in the civil and religious condition of the people, we find him "Sunday at Llangollen, sorry to find no English service. Read prayer and sermon to servants at home. Landlord came in. God be praised, this day was spent in the main, I trust, to His glory and my own edification." One of the party writing on the day after he left them, says: "Our society has received a sad blow in the departure of Mr. Wilberforce and Babington. The former, you have long known and admired; and to me he appears truly angelic; had I a spark of enthusiasm about me, I should doubt whether he were not a superior being."

## CHAPTER IX.

AFTER leaving Wales, he spent some time at Yoxhall Lodge, the seat of the Rev. T. Gisborne. Their college acquaintance had been interrupted when they left the University; but was afterwards renewed by a letter of inquiry from Mr. Gisborne, when he first saw the name of Wilberforce connected with the cause of Abolition. At Mr. Gisborne's house he had become well acquainted with his near connection, Mr. Babington. Intercourse between them soon grew into friendship; and for many years he made Yoxhall Lodge, the residence of Mr. Gisborne, or Rothley Temple, the seat of Mr. Babington, his ordinary summer residence. Here he enjoyed uninterrupted privacy, combined with the domestic comforts of his friend's family. In these visits he fulfilled those intentions which constant company had defeated in his own residence at Rayrigg; and devoted ten or twelve hours every day to study. "I could bear testimony," writes Mr. Gisborne, "were such attestation needful, to his laborious, unabated diligence, day after day, in pursuing his investigations on the Slave Trade, and in composing his invaluable work upon Practical Christianity." "Never," he has said, "was I in better spirits than when I thus passed my time in quiet study." He sallied forth always for a walk a short time before dinner, amongst the holly

groves of the then uninclosed Needwood forest, where—

“His grateful voice  
Sang its own joy, and made the woods rejoice.”

“Often have I heard its melodious tones,” says his host, “at such times, amongst the trees from the distance of full half a mile.”

His object in his present visit to Yoxall Lodge, was to make himself completely master of the vast mass of evidence which had now been collected upon the subject of the Slave Trade. Throughout the summer his attention had never been withdrawn from this subject. “I shall make no apology,” he wrote to Mr. Wyvill from Buxton, upon the 13th of August, “for putting into your hands the inclosed letter which I received this morning and beg you will return, and for desiring you to obtain and send me such information as you are able respecting the writer of it, to whom I am an utter stranger. It is necessary to be thus circumspect with regard to witnesses to be brought before our Committee, because it would be injurious to our cause to bring forward men of bad characters; at the same time we should always recollect that, from the nature of the case, it is not to be expected that many persons, who have been or who are in the higher walks of life, will be either well affected to us, or at least will venture to step forth to assist us with their testimony; and therefore we must content ourselves with persons, whose general conduct and estimation give us a right to contend for the veracity of their accounts.”

It was absolutely necessary for the effectual conduct of the cause that he should be well acquainted with all the allegations of its advocates. To this work therefore he now applied himself. “Monday, 4th October. Off

early from Llangollen—dined at Shrewsbury—began to work at slave evidence with Babington.” And on the following day, after entering his return with his accustomed “thank God, safely,” he adds: “Nov. 5th. Babington and I determined to work hard at slave evidence. 6th. Hard at work—breakfast alone, and need not come down to supper. No kind of restraint. I must for a time defer my tract, because it is advantageous to read the evidence rapidly to detect inconsistencies.” A letter of the 3d to Mr. Hey, of Leeds, explains the reference in the preceding entry. “I have not advanced a single step since we parted at Buxton, in composing the little tract of which I then spoke to you. This is not owing, however, either to indolence, procrastination, or any alteration in my opinion of the utility of the work; but after mature consideration, I thought it right to make the slave business my first object, and ever since I have been at all stationary I have been laboring at it with great assiduity. Nor are my labors nearly finished; at which you will not wonder when I tell you, that besides a great folio volume from the Privy Council, I have also to scrutinize with much care near 1400 folio pages of evidence delivered before the House of Commons. My eyes are very indifferent, otherwise pretty well—I work like a negro.”

“Mr. Wilberforce and Mr. Babington,” writes a friend from Yoxall Lodge, “have never appeared down-stairs since we came, except to take a hasty dinner, and for half an hour after we have supped; the Slave Trade now occupies them nine hours daily. Mr. Babington told me last night, that he had 1400 folio pages to read, to detect the contradictions, and to collect the answers which corroborate Mr. W.’s assertions in his speeches:

these, with more than 2000 papers to be abridged, must be done within a fortnight. They talk of sitting up one night in each week to accomplish it. The two friends begin to look very ill, but they are in excellent spirits, and at this moment I hear them laughing at some absurd questions in the examination, proposed by a friend of Mr. Wilberforce's. You would think Mr. W. much altered since we were at Rayrigg. He is now never riotous or noisy, but very cheerful, sometimes lively, but talks a good deal more on serious subjects than he used to do. Food, beyond what is absolutely necessary for his existence, seems quite given up. He has a very slight breakfast, a plain and sparing dinner, and no more that day except some bread about ten o'clock. I have given you this history, as you say every thing about him must be interesting to you, and this is all I at present see of him."

Such were his occupations until his return to London in November. Throughout this time, with the exception of two days, each of which yielded him eight hours of labor, he devoted daily nine hours and a half to his main employment. This was not the easy service of popular declamation on premises supplied by others, but the real conduct of affairs with all the toil and drudgery of careful preparation.

Upon the 9th he enters in his journal: "Heard this evening that on Sunday morning, at Bath, died what was mortal of John Thornton." "He was allied to me by relationship and family connection. His character is so well known that it is scarcely necessary to attempt its delineation. It may be useful, however, to state, that it was by living with great simplicity of intention and conduct in the practice of a Christian life, more than by any superiority of understanding or of know-

ledge, that he rendered his name illustrious in the view of all the more respectable part of his contemporaries. He had a counting-house in London, and a handsome villa at Clapham. He anticipated the disposition and pursuits of the succeeding generation. He devoted large sums annually to charitable purposes, especially to the promotion of the cause of religion both in his own and other countries. He assisted many clergymen, enabling them to live in comfort, and to practise a useful hospitality. His personal habits were remarkably simple. His dinner hour was two o'clock. He generally attended public worship at some church or Episcopalian chapel several evenings in the week, and would often sit up to a late hour, in his own study at the top of the house, engaged in religious exercises." "He died without a groan or a struggle, and in the full view of glory. Oh! may my last end be like his!"

The entries in his diary prove him to have been kept in a continued round of drudgery in Parliament and society during the entire winter, marked still with great care over his thoughts and feelings, and constant evidence that he strove diligently to walk with God, while he was doing his duty as a man. On the 7th of March, he adds to his remarks on the busy life he led: "I have lately heard of the death of many who seemed far more likely to live than I did. May these events be a warning to me. May I labor to do the work of my Heavenly Father, whilst it is day. My parliamentary and London winter should have begun as from a new era. Let me press forward with renewed alacrity. May the love of Christ constrain me." After four years' laborious preparation, on the 18th of April, 1791, he brought forward his motion for the abolition of the slave trade. The opposition to this measure had been

steadily gaining force in both the House of Peers and that of Commons. Mr. Wilberforce retired from his town lodgings to Clapham, for the purpose of more uninterrupted preparation, only coming up to the House when business appeared to demand his presence. So incessantly did he prosecute his object, that on the eve of the debate, he judged it right to devote to this, as a work of mercy, that holy day upon which it is the ordinary privilege of the busiest Christian to rest from worldly cares. "Spent," he says on several occasions, "Sunday as a working day. Did not go to church." "Gave up Sunday to slave business." "It was a grief to me, the whole time, to turn it from its true purpose." The coöperation of Fox, Pitt, and Burke, thinking and acting together with him on this subject, cheered him on in his exertions; but the events passing in France under the sacred and prostituted name of liberty, combined with the interests and prejudices of some, and the false statements of others, to create great hostility to the measure. One friend wrote to Wilberforce that he would "stand with the whole force of truth, with every rational argument, and with all the power of moving eloquence on his side, and all to no purpose;" and the venerable John Wesley, in a letter written with his own hand, and dated the day before that on which he sank into the slumber from which he waked no more on earth, and docketed by Wilberforce, "Wesley's last words," said to him:

"Feb. 24, 1791.

"MY DEAR SIR: Unless the Divine power has raised you up to be as Athanasius contra mundum, I see not how you can go through your glorious enterprise, in opposing that execrable villainy which is the scandal of

religion, of England, and of human nature. Unless God has raised you up for this very thing, you will be worn out by the opposition of men and devils: but if God be for you, who can be against you? Are all of them together stronger than God? Oh! be not weary of well doing. Go on in the name of God, and in the power of His might, till even American slavery, the vilest that ever saw the sun, shall vanish away before it. That He who has guided you from your youth up may continue to strengthen you in this and all things, is the prayer of,

“Dear Sir, your affectionate servant,

“JOHN WESLEY.”

He himself writes in his private memoranda: “May God enable me henceforth to live more to his glory, and bless me in the great work I have now in hand. May I look to Him for wisdom and strength, and the power of persuasion, and may I surrender myself to Him, and to the event, with perfect submission, and ascribe to Him all the praise if I succeed, and if I fail, say from the heart, Thy will be done.”

To this he was compelled to resort, as, notwithstanding all the labor he had bestowed on his preparation, and the support he received from the most influential statesmen of all parties, he was defeated by a vote of 163 to 88. Nothing daunted by this inauspicious result, he turned at once from the Parliament to the people of the kingdom, and hoping to affect, through the influence of their constituency, those members who were not amenable to his eloquence and the justice of his cause, while agents were sent abroad to disseminate information, in the shape of an “Abstract of Evidence,” and the “Substance of the Debate,” which



were printed, he retired with a friend to Clapham, where he staid an entire week, putting off for this purpose a visit to Pitt at Holwood, and dictated his speech for the report of the debate. At the conclusion of the session, he sought relaxation and renewed strength at his old quarters with his friends, Gisborne, at Yoxhall Lodge, and Babington, at Rothley Temple, first making his usual visit of a month to Bath. To Mr. Babington he writes: "I am afraid that even the mildness of your nature has been sharpened to exacerbation (as Dr. Johnson would term it) by my obstinate silence. But if so, it is rather a proof of your unreasonableness than of my criminality. . . This is the true mode of defense, to shift the war, like Tippoo, into the quarters of the enemy. . . However—behold me now upon my road to Bath, with Henry Thornton for my agreeable companion. We are snug and comfortable, but we would willingly increase our duet to a trio to admit your honor. Now do not suppose that after being half choked, and smoked, and roasted in town, I am about to finish the work in Bath. To have grass up to my door after so long a parching of my heels on the pavement of London, is not a luxury, but necessary for me. I have therefore leased a country house within reach of the pump-room, and so shall enjoy the comforts of a beautiful country residence, whilst, with the salubrious waters of King Bladud, I am washing away the 'sordes' contracted in the course of a long session." It was not merely from his delight in country scenes that he avoided Bath. The leisure hours which he thus secured, were devoted to reading and reflection.

Here he spent about a month, and refusing all invitations to dine out, enjoyed at home the society of a few

chosen friends, the chief amongst whom were Mr. Henry Thornton, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Eliot.

At this time he was engaged upon "Bible, Robertson's India and America, Arabian Nights, Horsley's Charges and Letters, Bishop Taylor's Sermons, Rennel, Taverner, *Æsop*, Bacon's Essays, Pope's Dunciad and Essay on Man, Epistles, etc., Asiatic Researches, Epictetus twice, Horace by heart." Though his reading and subjects of study were thus diversified, they were all such as were calculated to increase his stores of mental treasure, enlarge the scope of thought, and furnish him with material for profitable intercourse with his fellow-men; while, for the purifying his own affections and elevating his own soul, he says: "Read St. Paul's Epistles attentively two hours, I hope with profit. Christ is all; our fullness is from Him." At another time he says: "I am reading much; thinking too little." From Perry Mead (his Bath retreat) he wrote to Lord Muncaster:

"MY DEAR M.:

" 'If to her share some female errors fall,  
Look on her face, and you'll forget them all.'"

"This was the effect of beauty, and that of friendship is somewhat similar. I was more than half angry with you, (I will tell you why some other time,) and had intended to scold; but no sooner do I set my face Muncasterwards, than my features refuse their frown, and I can't help feeling and expressing a sensation of good nature and complacency. \* \* \* \* Here *old* Henry Thornton and I are lodged, and are leading a rational kind of life, and relishing not a little the quiet and retirement it allows us, after the bustle to which we have been so long condemned. I have heard

nothing of the worthy who is the cause of your friendly solicitude, (a West-India captain who had threatened him with personal violence,) and therefore begin to think that, by the prudent counsel of his advisers, he has laid aside his intentions ; however, I shall endeavor to place my peace of mind where nothing earthly can assail or molest it, and then, as Shakspeare says, 'Come what, come may.' "

This cool command of his feelings, thus founded on the only solid basis, was a valuable part of the result of his Christian training. It was at this period, that referring to the profanity of an acquaintance with grief, he says he never lost, and but once endangered the continuance of friendship, by a judicious effort to correct the habit. "I wrote to the late Sir —, and mentioned to him this bad habit. He sent me in reply an angry letter, returning a book that I had given him ; and asking for one he had given me. Instead of it, I sent him a second letter of friendly expostulation, which so won him over, that he wrote to me in the kindest tone, and begged me to send him back again the book he had so hastily returned."

To his friend, the Rev. Mr. Cookson, he thus writes :  
" \* \* \* I thank God I am pretty well, though my having in some degree shifted my load off my own shoulders on those of the House of Commons hardly makes me feel a whit lighter. I still have a wallet full : a man can carry no more than he can, and this physical necessity is commonly the determiner of my burden ; but then unto this burden I reckon great dinners, and other such *relaxing* and *recreating* operations as are to me more of labor in their effects, than even business itself. In the midst of my bustle, Sunday in-

terposes itself, and is a real relief. I extremely wish you could hear Mr. Scott (author of the Commentary) long enough to lose the sense of his ungainly manner; never did any one speak so home to my heart, or make such an impression on my memory, and I am not singular in these particulars; for Burgh, who is once more my inmate, entirely sympathizes with me. O my dear friend! how vain and trifling do all the pursuits of ambition appear to me, when I place them in comparison with that crown of glory that fadeth not away, and even with the comfortable quietness of a conscience void of offense. May God enable us to taste more of this peace which passeth all understanding, through the mediation of Jesus Christ and the sanctification of the Spirit. It is really sickening to me to return to the world, after having for a while withdrawn from it, and to see all its vices and its follies; but I find it difficult—I ought rather to say, impossible—to prevent my contracting some of its ways of thinking and judging. Pray for me, my dear friend, pray for me, that I may not only be ‘fruitful in every good work,’ but ‘increasing also in the knowledge of God.’ At that great day, I may discover the beneficial effects of those intercessions at the throne of grace; and the service is one we busy men have a peculiar right to require of you retired ones. Like Moses on the mountain, you may strengthen the hands of us who are fighting on the plain, and thus forward—and in the end, partake of the victory.”

In addition to the already overwhelming pressure on his time and thoughts, he now entered with much earnestness into the organization and commencement of the settlement at Sierra Leone, on the coast of Africa, a colony founded with the intention of making it the mart of a commerce with Africa, not only unconnected

with the trade in slaves, but in avowed hostility to it. And we shall find that from this period the care of its interests consumed much time and thought, and occasioned him no little anxiety, and even now we find it carrying him to town from the retirement he so valued, and while there the subject of thought and discussion between Thornton and himself. In one of his excursions he visited the seat of his friend Eliot, and notices the "Old Lady Chatham, a noble antiquity;" thence to Hannah More's, with H. Thornton, and after referring to the success with which the Cheddar Schools had been conducted, and the glad welcome he received as one of the patrons of the undertaking, says, "D. consulted me about a vow. I advised strongly against it;" and then with his characteristic self-condemnation, adds: "Oh! how ashamed I am made to feel by finding what is thought of me, and how little I really correspond with it." Having, as already stated, no residence on his landed property, he was not in the habit of resorting thither, and the care of his estate was committed entirely to two of his friends; one of whom at this time writes to him: "I am sorry to inform you that you have an estate in Yorkshire, that that estate is out of lease yearly, and that before you let it again you ought in prudence to be acquainted with its value and its circumstances." And soon after he enters in his diary: "Heard of Duncombe's excellent settling of the Markington estate, and very thankful that all the old tenants are preserved." "Went on to look at my land—*my land, just like any one else's land.*" When about to repair to Babington's and Gisborne's this year, he wrote to the former: "I have written to Gisborne, and have told him I will call at the Lodge just when it will suit them. I understand he is rather more

uncertain than you whether he can take me in, having taken the precaution of unroofing his house. He has not even the merit of originality, for it is an old expedient for turning out an unwelcome occupier, and the transfer from that to keeping me out is easy." When he was ultimately fixed he enters his determination, "To be as diligent whilst here as I can be consistently with health, and to cultivate, in prayer and reading Scripture, through the help of the Spirit of Christ, the graces of the Christian temper," and on another occasion: "It pleased God to give me this morning, an affecting sense of my own sinfulness, and a determination to live henceforth, by His grace, more to His glory." In addition to the works already mentioned as occupying his attention, we find many more of a character indicating the earnest cultivation of his mind, history and philosophy sharing his attention with other things. Toward the close of the recess of Parliament, after a visit to his mother and sister, he returned to Yoxhall Lodge, and, contrasting his own homeless state with the welcome that awaited the return of his host, he describes himself as—"Glad to see my friends again, and felt sadly the want of wife and children to hail my return, and yet looked up to heaven as the true object of desire." Even here in his retirement his thoughts were not long diverted from the subject of his African clients, and we find him writing to Mr. Wyvill: "It lately occurred to me that you might like to be concerned in what, considering all the circumstances, I must call the splendid plan for establishing a settlement on the coast of Africa. I therefore directed the last report to the court of proprietors, to be transmitted to you from London. This, I believe, will give you ample information, added to what you have al-

ready obtained from the newspapers, concerning the general nature and intentions of our institution. I need only add, that it has been since determined to raise the capital to £150,000, and that the accounts we have received from our agent, both of the number and quality of the Nova Scotia negroes, are extremely pleasing. I dare say we shall be in no want of subscriptions.

“ P.S.—When I dictated the sentence respecting the Nova Scotia negroes, I thought an account had been given of them in the report, but as in since glancing my eye over the pages, I see no mention of it, it may be proper to be a little more particular. The negroes here referred to formerly inhabited the southern provinces of the United States, and having sided with us during the war, and being consequently obnoxious to the Americans, they were as a *reward* of their *loyalty* transported to the *genial* climate of Nova Scotia, where they have been ever since in a most deplorable way. Besides the rigors of a climate so ill adapted to their constitution, they were very ill treated in other respects. The land promised them was not given, etc. Sir H. Clinton spoke to me himself respecting them, and bore testimony to their claim on the protection and good offices of this country. These poor people hearing a confused report of an intended settlement on the coast of Africa, sent one of their number about a year ago to London, to inquire into the truth of it, and to request, if it should seem expedient to him, that Government would transport them thither. We took up the cause, and administration sent out orders accordingly. We expect about seven hundred, men, women, and children, will come over to Sierra Leone, with our agent, this or next month, and there is every reason to hope they

will form a valuable acquisition. You understand they are all free people." This business required his attendance in London, and we accordingly find him leaving Mr. Gisborne's "with great disinclination, and taking up his abode at Mr. H. Thornton's city residence, in order to give himself to his duty."



## CHAPTER X.

At the beginning of the year 1792, we find him at his own lodgings in Palace Yard, and on the New Year's Day, he says: "A better Sunday than some past. Cecil's in the evening, and went over the sermon afterwards, to my family, (servants only.) I have been to-day receiving the Sacrament, and looking back upon the past year, and desire now to purpose steadfastly to lead a new life. I have been in a hurry of business since I came to town, and short in my devotions. All my resolutions for the future must be vain without the help of God. Yet relying on it, and endeavoring to strengthen the main principle, I will strive to keep such rules as seem proper in my situation." And on the 4th, he says: "I thank God I have been in a rather more watchful and sober frame of mind, than for some time past. I pray God it may continue. How much room is there still for more watchfulness! Yet I trust I am mending." Praying to be guided aright, and defended from unjustifiable conformity with the habits of those with whom he was associated, we find him plunged into business with Pitt and Dundas, and others. "At the Queen's birthday, at St. James's. Dined at Pitt's. Sadly idle." ("What stuff such a day as this is!" is his comment.) "Attending the preaching of Thomas Scott, at the Lock Hospital." "Very cold and

sluggish in spiritual affections," but "hoping this discourse on procrastination has roused me."

To Mr. Mason, whom Dr. Burgh describes, "as entertaining paternal feelings towards you, which have received an accession from your late kind attention to him," he writes soon after his return to London: "To you, who know Yoxall Lodge, and can, by the utmost stretch of your imagination, form to yourself some idea of *my* London, I need hardly say how I feel the change; yet I trust I am on my post, and in that persuasion I determine not to abandon it. I endeavor as much as I can to preserve my Needwood Forest mind in my Palace Yard habitation, and whilst I am in the busy and the social circle, (and I will confess to you the latter is to me the more laborious and dangerous service of the two,) I labor, looking to a better strength than my own, to discharge the duties of this life, from a regard to the happiness of the other, and from a sentiment of gratitude towards Him to whose undeserved mercy alone I can look for its attainment. I will not be so affected as to offer any apology for exhibiting this picture of my mind; on the contrary, I am persuaded you will rather thank me for it, accepting it as a proof of the cordiality and affection with which I am,

"Very sincerely yours,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

But although he watched over himself thus diligently, and withdrew from all the superfluous intercourse with society, "dining from home less than in former years, and giving fewer dinners, either ordinary or formal, upon Milner's persuasion;" yet his wakeful eye detected some injury to his spirit from his continual engagements. "Both my body and mind suffer from

over-occupation. My heart is now in a cold and senseless state, and I have reason to adore the goodness of God in not hardening me. I have been short and cold, and wandering in private devotions. Habit and the grace of God preventing me have kept me in a decent observance of external duties, but all within is overgrown with weeds, and every truly Christian grace well nigh choked. Yet, O thou all-merciful Father, and thou Saviour of sinners, receive me yet again, and supply me with strength. Oh! let me now quicken the things that are ready to die. My worldly connections certainly draw me into temptations great and innumerable, yet I dare not withdraw from a station in which God has placed me. Still, let me deal honestly with myself in this matter, and if, on further trial, I find reason to believe I ought to lead a more sequestered life, may I not dread the imputation of singularity. If from my extreme weakness this public company-keeping life can not be made consistent with a heavenly frame of mind, I think I ought to retire more. Herein and in all things may God direct me; but let me strive more against my corruptions, and particularly not straiten prayer. I find myself confiding in my resolutions; let me universally distrust myself, but let me throw myself at the feet of Christ as an undone creature, distrusting, yea, despairing of myself, but firmly relying upon Him. 'Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.' 'They that wait on the Lord shall renew their strength.' "

These serious thoughts with which he mingled in the unthinking crowd of ordinary companions, were quickened by the affecting accounts which he received of the last hours of a near relation. "22d January. Saw the astonishing letter from Miss More, containing an ac-

count, written inter moriendum, of Harriet Bird's death at six o'clock on Wednesday morning. Oh! may my latter end be like hers. Strongly affected; may it be deeply." "I have been extremely affected by Miss More's account of Harriet's death-bed scene.—How can I but be so—particularly her illumination, and the following agony just before she was taken to glory. I have felt these things, I humbly hope, not in vain. She prayed for me on her death-bed. How does her progress shame me! I am behind, far behind all of them. But my eyes will not allow me to write; many tears to-day from mental struggles have injured them. May God, for Christ's sake, cause them not to flow in vain. I fly to Him for pardon, pleading the blood of Jesus. Though I almost despair, yet Christ is mighty to save. I have been looking over letters written to me by Milner, Pitt, etc., when I first entered upon a religious profession. How little have I corresponded to the outset! Yet it is not too late. But I am apt to take comfort after writing thus, as though the business was done. Let me dismiss all vain confidence and build upon the sure foundation."

A letter detailing the events which had occurred at Bath, called forth the following reply:

"PALACE YARD, 20th January, 1792.

"TO WILLIAM MANNING, ESQ.:

"MY DEAR MANNING: My eyes are but indifferent to-day, and I have much work for them; yet I can not forbear taking up my pen for a few moments, not from form you will believe, but feeling, on the perusal of your kind letter. Such a crowd of ideas rush into my mind, that I scarce know how to discriminate or select them. I can not help almost envying you the scene

you have been witnessing. O my dear friend! never forget it; let it still be present to your mind, and let it force all those concerns which are so apt to engross our imaginations, and interest our hearts, to retire to their proper distance, or rather to shrink to their true point of insignificance. Never let me forget it. When I seem to you at any time to be intoxicated as it were by the hurry, the business, or the dissipation of life, spare not the best offices of friendship; recall me to that sobriety and seriousness of mind which become those who know not when they may be called away: place before me the solemn triumphs of which you have been a spectator, and animate me to press forward in emulation of so glorious an example. To die the death, we must indeed live the life, of Christians. We must fix our affections on things above, not on things on the earth. We must endeavor habitually to preserve that frame of mind, and that course of conduct with which we may be justly said to be waiting for the appearance of the Lord Jesus Christ. I know not any description of a Christian which impresses itself so forcibly as this on my mind. Alas! when with this which I ought to be I compare myself as I am, I am lost in unutterable shame and self-abasement. But I throw myself on the mercies of God in Christ; I resolve to venture all on this foundation; and relying on that help which is promised to them that ask it, I determine to struggle with all my corruptions, and to employ what is left to me of life, and talents, and influence, in the way which shall appear to me most pleasing to my heavenly Father. Oh! with what humiliation have I to look back on the years wherein all these were so grossly wasted; and what reason have I to rejoice that I was not then snatched away!

"I will not apologize for giving you this picture of my mind; you will accept it, I trust, (such indeed it is,) as a proof of affection and confidence. In truth, I often regret that we are so separated, as not to afford us the opportunity of exhibiting proofs of this last to each other more frequently in personal communications. May the time at length come, when, through the goodness of God, we may indulge (with those friends we have before lost for this life) uninterrupted and ever-growing effusions of affection. I must lay aside my pen. Adieu. Remember me most kindly to Mary. I rejoice to hear she is so supported. Assure her of my constant prayers. Remember me also kindly to the Mores and to Dr. Fraser, whose tender assiduities I have heard of with sincere pleasure, and reflect on with real gratitude. Believe me, my dear Manning, in great haste,

"Ever affectionately yours,  
W. WILBERFORCE."

The business of Parliament at the session of that year was of no usual character. The violence of party feeling at home was much exasperated by the horrors of faction abroad; and the massacre of St. Domingo was especially calculated to render more difficult the task of the friends of the negro race and advocates of the abolition of the slave trade; for though the attention of Wilberforce to the trade in negroes had been aroused first by the condition of the slave population in the West-India Islands, the idea of emancipation of those already in bondage was not entertained until long subsequently. The appeal to the people of Great Britain which had been made in consequence of the failure of the attempt in Parliament, had been successful in

arousing an intense feeling in many parts of the kingdom. The greatest trial to Wilberforce was the apprehended defection of Pitt from the ranks of his supporters. To this step he was impelled by the St. Domingo massacres. "I must repose myself on God," says Mr. Wilberforce, on receiving this information. "The insincerity of my heart has been shamefully evinced to me to-day, when I could hardly bring myself to resolve to do my duty and please God at the expense (as I suspect it will turn out) of my cordiality with Pitt, or rather his with me." "Do not be afraid," he tells Mr. Babington, "lest I should give ground: I hope, through God's blessing, to be enabled to press forward, and never to abandon my pursuit or relax in it till—a supposition hardly conceivable—it shall become right so to do. This is a matter wherein all personal, much more all ministerial attachments must be as dust in the balance. Meanwhile, exert yourselves in the country with renewed vigor. I should be glad to have some petitions, if possible, even before my notice, that it may be evident the country is alarmed, and that no receding of mine could prevent the measure coming forward. Poor fellow! I can feel for you: we people that live in this bustling place, are called off to other things from what would otherwise haunt and harass us."

In the midst of the excitement growing out of this new aspect of his affairs, he writes to Rev. T. Gisborne: "I thank God I keep well: but what a sad, harassing place this is, and how infinitely grateful I ought to feel for the frequent recurrence of a day of undisturbed quiet, when it becomes a duty to retire, and which leaves me not the embarrassment of having to decide, on each particular occasion, between the comparative advantage of continuing in the busy scene or

absconding from it! I wish I could sentence some of my friends to a little solitary imprisonment. They might then see things in their true dimensions—as a painter would say, in better keeping—whereas they now think the objects close to them really giants, whilst they are in truth no more than pigmies, and the giants in the background dwindle into pigmies in their view. May you and I, my dear friend, live by faith and not by sight.”

The excessive zeal, without knowledge, and untempered by prudence, of some of his supporters, was quite as difficult an element of discord to keep in subjection as the lukewarmness or tergiversation of others; but through all he was kept unmoved because he thus staid himself on an arm of power which never failed. Even Mr. Clarkson caused him at this time some apprehension, and the manner in which he allowed himself to fraternize with the Jacobins of France and those in Great Britain who had imbibed the same views, caused many to express their fears. To Mr. Hey, Wilberforce writes at this time: “It is certainly true, and perfectly natural, that these Jacobins are all friendly to the Abolition; and it is no less true and natural that this operates to the injury of our cause. However, I am not discouraged. You seem yourself to be deep in Abolition lore; I am glad of it, as I am sure you will be proportionably earnest. It is a superficial view alone which makes a man of sense honestly against us.”\* This evil had been for some time spreading amongst a certain class of his supporters; and had scarcely been suppressed by his skill and patience. “You will see Clarkson,” writes Mr. Wilberforce to Lord Muncaster;

\* To W. Hey, Esq.



"caution him against talking of the French Revolution; it will be ruin to our cause." "Clarkson," writes Dr. Milner, "would tell you that he had a long conversation with me. I wish him better health, and better notions in politics; no government can stand on such principles as he appeals to, and maintains. I am very sorry for it, because I see plainly advantage is taken of such cases as his, in order to represent the friends of Abolition as levellers. This is not the only instance where the converse of a proposition does not hold: levellers certainly are friends of Abolition." Great mischief had already risen to the cause. "What business had your friend Clarkson," asked Dundas, "to attend the Crown and Anchor last Thursday? He could not have done a more mischievous thing to the cause you have taken in hand." "On Wednesday last," says Mr. Wilberforce's diary, shortly after he received this letter, "to Pitt's at Holwood. Staid till Saturday—with Pitt to town in his phaeton, and interesting talk about Abolition. Some vote against it not to encourage Paine's disciples."

This impression affected his success elsewhere; it had reached the highest quarter with peculiar force; and created henceforth an insuperable obstacle to the exercise of any ministerial influence in behalf of Abolition. There had been a time when George III. had whispered at the levee, "How go on your black clients, Mr. Wilberforce?" but henceforth he was a determined opposer of the cause. Yet notwithstanding these inauspicious facts, he did not hesitate again to bring forward his motion, which he accordingly did on the 2d of April in a debate which he describes the following morning to Mr. Hey. "I know how much you are interested in what regards our poor African fellow-crea-

tures, and therefore I take up my pen for a single moment to inform you that, after a very long debate, (we did not separate till near seven this morning,) my motion for immediate Abolition was put by; though supported strenuously by Mr. Fox and by Mr. Pitt with more energy and ability than were almost ever exerted in the House of Commons." "Windham, who has no love for Pitt, tells me that Fox and Grey, with whom he walked home after the debate, agreed with him in thinking Pitt's speech one of the most extraordinary displays of eloquence they had ever heard. For the last twenty minutes he really seemed to be inspired." "He was dilating upon the future prospects of civilizing Africa, a topic which I had suggested to him in the morning." "We carried a motion, however, afterwards for gradual Abolition, against the united forces of Africans and West-Indians, by a majority of 238 to 85. I am congratulated on all hands, yet I can not but feel hurt and humiliated. We must endeavor to force the gradual Abolitionists in *their* Bill (for I will never myself bring forward a parliamentary license to rob and murder) to allow as short a term as possible, and under as many limitations." "I am glad to hear you say," replies Mr. Hey, "that you will not bring in a Bill to license robbery and murder. I think this resolution becoming your conduct on the ground you have taken. But if no scruple of this kind weighed with you, you will undoubtedly have the advantage in being the corrector, rather than the proposer of the Bill. What you propose would probably be curtailed in some degree. Whatever others propose you will probably be able to modify."

In this hurry of business he enters: "Perhaps I have been a little more attentive to my devotions in this

last week; yet too little thinking of God's presence and favor. But though with a cold heart, I will proceed, praying for more grace; and though this next fortnight will be a sadly hurrying time, I will hope, by God's help, to amend at least in some things. Look to Jesus: all other modes are vain."

Mr. Dundas brought forward his Resolutions for a gradual Abolition. "After a hard struggle," writes Mr. Wilberforce, "we were last night defeated in our attempt to fix the period of the Abolition for the 1st of January, 1795; the numbers being 161 to 121. But we carried the 1st of January, 1796, (Mr. Dundas had proposed 1800,) by a majority of 151 against 132. On the whole this is more than I expected two months ago, and I have much cause for thankfulness. We are to contend for the number of slaves to be imported; and *then for the House of Lords.*"

Upon the 1st of May, when the question came again before the House, Mr. Dundas declared himself unable to propose his Resolutions as amended by the late division. They were therefore moved by Mr. Pitt, and upon the following day communicated to the Lords in a free conference. Here the opponents of the measure rallied their broken forces; and in spite of Lord Grenville's able arguments, prevailed upon the House to proceed by calling evidence to their own bar; a resolution in itself equivalent to a direct vote, which followed on the 5th of June, when the business was formally postponed to the ensuing session.

The bustle of this busy session had not dispelled those serious purposes with which he had commenced its labors. "The beginning of a long recess draws near, and I will endeavor to consecrate it to God by a day of solemn prayer and fasting. I will labor to lay

aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset me, and to adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour ; to follow peace with all men, and above all to love the Lord my God with all my heart. Oh ! strengthen me, Lord, by thy grace, for I am very weakness ; cleanse me, for I am all corruption ; and since ease begets carelessness, may I be clothed with humility, and may I fear alway."

## CHAPTER XI.

THE contest in behalf of Abolition was throughout conducted by Mr. Wilberforce in a spirit of conciliation towards the supporters of the trade. Some amongst the West-Indian body were his personal friends, and of all "we should not forget," he writes to Dr. Currie, "that Christian candor is due to the characters of those who carry it on. There may be, I doubt not, amongst them many men of enlarged and humane minds. I trust that you have done me the justice to acquit me of having adopted any such indiscriminate and false judgment as that you oppose." But it was not to be expected, that in a strife which called into violent action the whole energies of many lower natures, he should always meet with opponents of a spirit like his own. He had throughout the struggle to bear the imputation of unworthy motives, and the various assaults of personal slander. No one could unite with him in this cause, without in some measure sharing in this treatment.

To engage in correspondence with Wilberforce was esteemed sufficient ground for such annoyance. In the island of Tortola, the papers of an English gentleman known to be guilty of this crime were seized by order of the president of the council, on the charge of their containing proofs of a treasonable correspondence with the

French. This jealousy extended even to Great Britain. "The box in which our petition is inclosed," says a Glasgow correspondent, "has been directed to another, that its contents may be unsuspected." And other residents in Liverpool of the same rank of life, asked with the late Dr. Currie: "If you write, be pleased to direct without your franking it." Their correspondence was conducted in unsigned letters, sent under the covers of unsuspected persons. In a letter which does not allude to West-Indian matters, and was therefore openly transmitted, Dr. Currie adds this postscript: "Trusting this letter to our post-office with your address I shall be anxious to hear of its safe arrival." The attacks which were aimed against himself, were not always of this comparatively harmless character. At an early period of the contest he had been in danger of personal violence from "one who, from my having been compelled in quality of examiner in the committee to bring forward his inconsistencies, conceived so violent a hatred of me as even to threaten my life." The summer of 1792 had exposed him to two more such assailants. He had just returned to London upon Mr. Henry Thornton's summons, when the challenge of a West-Indian captain, which had been delivered at his Bath lodgings, followed him by post to town. He marks in his journal his sense of God's goodness in so ordering this business that he was thus allowed leisure to reflect upon the line of conduct which it became him to adopt. "Talked," says his diary at this time, "with S. about duelling. He says he should fight, though disapproving. I deprecated. My plans uncertain. I rather think of returning to Bath, perhaps partly from a desire of not appearing to be deterred thence; and partly from thinking, that a proper

and easy explanation of my determination and views in respect to duelling, might be in all respects eligible. At all events, I will enter now upon a more diligent course, which may suit any plan. I often waste my time in waiting for suitable seasons ; whereas I ought, as a single man, to be at home everywhere ; or at least, to be always at work." This affair was carried no further ; but he was, at the very same time, brought into collision with another assailant, to whose threatened violence he was exposed for more than two years. Kimber, another West-Indian captain, was thus described by Sir James Stonehouse, to whom Mr. Wilberforce had applied for the particulars of his character : "He is a very bad man, a great spendthrift ; one who would swear to any falsehood, and who is linked with a set of rascals like himself." This man had been charged by Mr. Wilberforce, in the debate of April, 1792, with great cruelty in his conduct of the trade. Several trials in the courts of law followed ; in one of which the captain was himself capitally indicted for the murder of a negro girl. Of this charge he was not found guilty ; escaping, in the judgment of Mr. Wilberforce, "through the shameful remissness of the Crown lawyers, and the indecent behavior of a high personage who from the bench identified himself with the prisoner's cause." These reasons were aided by the apparent contradictions of a principal witness, in his evidence upon a collateral point, for which he was tried and convicted in the penalties of perjury ; a sentence afterwards commuted by the Crown.

As soon as he was discharged from prison he applied to Mr. Wilberforce for what he termed remuneration for his wrongs. "July 11th. Morning received Kimber's letter. Friday, by Pitt's advice, wrote answer to

Kimber." The satisfaction he demanded was: "A public apology, £5000 in money, and such a place under government as would make me comfortable." Upon receiving a brief refusal of his propositions, Kimber had recourse to violence. "Kimber lying in wait for me—first civil, then abusive." "Kimber called between seven and eight, and again about ten." "'Very savage-looking,' Amos said, 'he went away muttering and shaking his head.'" The interference of Lord Sheffield (an honorable opponent) at last terminated this annoyance, but not before one of his friends (the late Lord Rokeby) had thought it needful to become his armed companion in a journey into Yorkshire, to defend him from anticipated violence. "I know," wrote Mr. Wilberforce at this time to Lord Muncaster in Cumberland, "how little the proverb, 'Out of sight out of mind,' holds good in the case of any of your friendships, and therefore I was not surprised at the warmth with which you expressed yourself on the subject of Kimber. How came you to hear any thing of the matter? Was it from me? I am sure I intended not to mention it lest I should awaken your kind solicitude, which at three hundred miles from its object is not the most comfortable companion. Perhaps at some unguarded moment the matter slipped from my pen. I don't yet know whether he has any further measures in store: meanwhile be assured I will do all for my own security, which you would think proper if you were my adviser. I can't say I apprehend much, and I really believe, that if he were to commit any act of violence it would be beneficial rather than injurious to the cause."

Being still detained in the neighborhood of London by Sierra Leone business, he applied himself at once



to his intended course of study. "Taken in," he says, "to dine at W. Smith's with a vast company—Dr. Aikin, Gillies, Mr. and Mrs. Barbauld, Helen Maria Williams, Mackintosh, Mr. Belaham, Mr. Sabbatiere, Mr. and Mrs. Towgood. I was not sufficiently guarded in talking about religion after dinner. Mackintosh talked away—he spoke most highly of Pitt's Slave Trade speech. Came home as if hunted to Thornton's quiet family party, and much struck with the difference. I threw out some things which may perhaps be of use. 25th. Had a long conversation with Pearson,\* on the proper measure of a Christian's living in society, whether religious or worldly. He was very strong for solitude, and speaks of the benefit he personally has received from it. I talked with him very openly, and was much struck with what he said. Sunday, 29th. I have to-day been for several hours engaged in religious reading, but too languidly. I have had this week some very serious talk with Mr. Pearson. He strongly pressed solitude from reason, Scripture, and his own personal experience. I believe he is right, and mean to seek more quiet and solitude than I have done; to consider the point, and draw up my thoughts upon it. 30th. Read Howe 'On Delighting in God,' and much affected by it. Heard from Osborne that there would be no county meeting, and therefore set free; and on thinking the matter over, resolved for Bath. Wrote to Mr. Cecil to ask him to be my companion. Amongst my reasons for Bath, one, though not the leading one, is the desire of solitude; may God render it useful to me."

On his road to Bath, to which as usual he resorted

\* The distinguished surgeon.

on the close of the session, it occurred to him "that it might be useful for me to see Sir W. Young, who is just come from the West-Indies. Boswell there, a great enemy of the abolition, says he was at Kimber's trial and gloried in it. He talked of Johnson, etc. Sat up too late. Sir W. very friendly—talked of slave-trade, and mentioned having found a great number of children without relations on board several ships he visited, who, from inquiry, appeared to have been kidnapped. Had some serious talk with Bozzy, who admitted the depravity of human nature. Last night he expressed his disbelief of eternal punishment. Asked Sir W. to take his boy home, and walked off into the West of England with the 'Spirit of Athens' under his arm, and two shirts and nightcap in his pocket sans servant. Drove with Sir W. Young in his phaeton to Maidenhead, and then got into my carriage. Sir W. speaks highly of the Moravians and their operations. He himself preached to his slaves on the Ten Commandments, etc. His adherence to his own principles is highly honorable to him. How little is my heart or conduct answerable to my greater knowledge!"

"My dear Muncaster," he writes, in answer to a friendly remonstrance upon the postponement of a long-promised visit, "notwithstanding your admonition, behold me entering upon a course of Bath waters, prudently however and moderately like Muncaster the citizen; not rashly and violently like Pennington the soldier. My dear fellow, I the more readily yield myself to the impulse of duty which brings me hither, because it is altogether contrary to my inclination, and I am therefore sure I am not under any unfair bias. It would be a high gratification to me to be cooling my feet upon the mossy brow of Muncaster Park, instead of burning

and parching them on the rest-refusing pavement of Bath. But do not think I am dissatisfied, and not rather grateful to God for His overflowing mercies to me of every kind; indeed I know no man who has so many. I have often thought that the loss of nineteen twentieths of my fortune would scarcely be a loss to me, since I have so many friends whose attachment I know so well that I should not fear to visit them though reduced to poverty; and you know human nature well enough to acknowledge that this implies confidence. I assure you that in such a case I should not be slow to direct my steps to Muncaster. You will, I know, be shocked to hear that poor Philips has been suddenly carried out of this world. O my dear friend! may events like this impress on us, the survivors, by how frail a tenure we hold our present life, and excite us to strive for that state wherein we may be always ready to attend the awful call. In a moment like that how contemptible will appear all those objects of pleasure or ambition which have at times engaged our warmest affections! 'Give an account of thy stewardship, for thou mayest be no longer steward.' What emphatic words!

"I am always affectionately yours,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

He was soon joined by such a companion as he had desired, in the person of Mr. Grant, who, with his wife and eldest daughter, arrived at Bath upon the 10th of August. "Since the Grants are with me," he says, "I study less. I have been reading Sir B. Boothby's pamphlets, Mackintosh's, G. Rose's; Goldsmith's Animated Nature, Lowth's Isaiah, Owen, Thomson's Seasons, and Horace by heart."

"17th. This is the day on which Pitt, Dundas, P. Arden, and Steele are at Hamels. I am disposed to wish myself with them. I find that even here, in religious society, I can have an earthly mind; yet to depart (when not necessary to be with them) from those who fear not God, and to associate with those who do, is one part of waiting on God to which the promise is made. 'Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.'"

Though he at this time diminished in some measure his intercourse with those of whom he could not hope that they were living with a constant reference to unseen things, yet he did not retire rudely from their friendship. Not that his intimacies had ever been among the enemies of religion; he had never been so blind as to expect a national reformation from men of abandoned character; and neither Mr. Pitt nor his other friends had ever been tainted with unbelief, or allied to that infidel party which has at all times found its rallying point in opposition to God and His Church. Hence his constant care to employ his private influence for the advancement of religion was not impeded by their opposition of principles: the maxims for which he contended might not be duly appreciated, but they formed part of their admitted creed.

"The Convention" had bestowed upon Mr. Wilberforce in the course of this summer the doubtful honor of French citizenship. "I was provoked lately," writes Mr. Mason, "to see your name registered among the list of citizens by the French savages. And for what? Merely for taking up the cause of humanity previous to their taking up the love of freedom; the love of which, even during their first and best exertions, was not strong enough to induce them to follow your

humane steps." "I am considering," he himself writes to Mr. Babington, "how to prevent the ill effect which this vote might have upon our Abolition cause." Such an opportunity was afforded him by a public meeting held in London at this time to raise subscriptions for the emigrant clergy.

"Friday, 20th. To town to the French clergy public meeting, and consented to be on the committee at Burke's request, partly to do away French citizenship."

It was about this time he formed the acquaintance of Mr. Shore, afterward Lord Teignmouth, and on the 1st of October he mentions being much pleased with him, and on the 2d, "Off to Walmer Castle on a visit to Pitt, who had then recently received from the King the wardenship of the Cinque Ports.

"4th. At night alone with Pitt, but talked politics only—did not find myself equal to better talk. I came here hoping that I might really find an opportunity of talking seriously with Pitt. What am I, to do so with any one? O Christ! help me. 5th. Morning had some serious talk with Pitt—interrupted or should have had more. Walked with him. I see much reason to admire his integrity, public spirit, and magnanimity in despising unpopularity."

The same humility is displayed in another instance at this time. His friendship for the family of Sir C. Middleton has been noticed already, and about this time he found occasion to display it on receiving a letter from Sir C., "containing the account of the sudden death of Lady M. and of Edwards's child. I resolved to go to them, hoping I might comfort them and perhaps be of use to Edwards. Oh! how unavailing is all but the grace of God to change the heart! *Here I am earthly-minded. Oh! change my heart, Thou who*

alone canst effect this mighty transformation." How simply and honestly does he thus display the existence of that corruption which cleaves so closely to our fallen nature. Purposing to be useful to another, conscious himself of sin. He then proceeds to exhibit the power of divine grace to support under trial.

"15th. Spent most of the day talking to Sir Charles. Much affected at night, and prayed earnestly. 17th. Funeral this evening. Sir C. greatly supported, and Mrs. Edwards had prayed to God, if it were His will, for strength to bear the funeral of her child, and she supported it without a wet eye. Sir C. said, in walking from church, that he was really very comfortable, and that though he felt much in slowly pacing after the coffin, yet on entering the church, he found a *holy contentment and composure* which was scarcely ever disturbed. He went to the grave."

In the autumn he went to Yoxall Lodge, where, with the exception of a short visit to Rothley Temple, he remained until he was called to London by the business of the session. Here he resumed the diligent employments of the preceding summer, giving however more time than formerly to studies of a directly religious character. "I have been employing," he says, "most of this morning in reading St. Paul's Epistles to the Romans and the Galatians." It was by this careful study, which no press of business ever interrupted, and which continued daily through his life, that he obtained an acquaintance with holy Scripture unusual even in professed theologians. A marked advance in his character during the course of this year may be traced in the altered tone of his most private entries. Still indeed they abounded in that deep humiliation with which they who have looked closely into the perfect law

of liberty must ever contemplate their own fulfillment of its demands; yet they bear already more of that calm and peaceful character which cast so warm a light upon his later days. "Though utterly *unworthy*," he says, "I thank God for having enabled me to pray with earnestness. Oh! that this may not be as the morning cloud and as the early dew! By His grace I will persevere with more earnestness than ever, laboring to work out my own salvation in an entire and habitual dependence upon Him." "If you have truly learned to feel the insufficiency of your own powers," says the Dean of Carlisle, to whom he had poured forth his earnest desires, after a more rapid growth in holiness, "you have made more progress than you think of; and if you can support that feeling and act upon it for any time together, your advance is very considerable." He judged himself indeed to be "in a more pleasing state." "I have been praying," he says, "earnestly to God for his Spirit through Christ to renew my corrupt nature and make me spiritually-minded; what folly is all else! Let me take courage, relying on the sure promises of God in Christ and the powerful operations of the Spirit of grace. 'Though I am weak He is strong.' I must more cherish this heavenly inhabitant."

This tranquil state of feeling was henceforth fostered by a system of greater domestic intercourse with the friends whose principles he valued, and by mingling consequently less frequently than of old in the turbulent currents of life. During many years he had been in the habit of resorting freely to the house of Mr. John Thornton, keeping his own hours and following his own pursuits, and after the death of Mr. Thornton, he agreed to share a house on Clapham Common with Mr. Henry Thornton, the youngest son of his deceased rela-

tive. Whilst his general influence was silently extending, there grew up around him here a chosen circle of peculiar friends. Amongst these must especially be noticed the Hon. E. J. Eliot, Mr. Grant, and Mr. Henry Thornton. Mr. Eliot, his early friend and fellow traveller, was now settled, for the sake of his society, in the immediate neighborhood of Battersea Rise. The loss of a wife to whom he was ardently attached, (the favorite sister of Mr. Pitt,) had given a tone of earnest piety to the whole character of Mr. Eliot, and taught him to coöperate in every useful scheme suggested by his friend; whilst at the same time there had been inflicted on his spirit a wound from which he never rallied. His death, in 1797, was attributed by those who knew his inmost feelings, to the lingering sorrow of a broken heart. Of Mr. Grant and Mr. Henry Thornton it is needless here to speak. "Few men," says the latter, referring to this period, "have been blest with worthier or better friends than have fallen to my lot. Mr. Wilberforce stands at the head of these, for he was the friend of my youth. I owed much to him in every sense soon after I came out in life; for his enlarged mind, his affectionate and condescending manners, and his very superior piety, were exactly calculated to supply what was wanting to my improvement and my establishment in a right course. It is chiefly through him that I have been introduced to a variety of other most valuable associates." "When I entered life, I saw a great deal of dishonorable conduct among people who made great profession of religion. In my father's house I met with persons of this sort. This so disgusted me, that, had it not been for the admirable pattern of consistency and disinterestedness which I saw in Mr. Wilberforce, I should have been in danger of a sort of infidelity."



Such was at this time his position ; high in public estimation, and rich in private friends ; engaged in the conduct of a most important cause ; with his mind now disciplined by culture, and enriched by study ; whilst the unseen life of his spirit, escaping from its early struggles, was strengthening into tranquil vigor, as religion took a firmer hold upon his character, and leavened more thoroughly the whole man. By this early self-discipline he had purchased the calm and peaceful obedience of the remainder of his course. He was now about to be tried in his political life with far more searching difficulties than any which he had yet encountered. Like that holy man of old to whom a severe observer has beautifully compared him, he was prepared by humility and self-denial for the arduous trials of a public life ; and like him he supported them with uncorrupted faith. "From a careful scrutiny," says Mr. Matthias,\* "into the public and private life of Mr. Wilberforce, I am inclined to think that his enemies would be forced into an acknowledgment that they can find no occasion against this man, except they find it against him concerning the law of his God."

\* Pursuits of Literature.

## CHAPTER XII.

There was no period of the public life of Mr. Wilberforce fraught with more anxiety, none in which greater responsibility attached to his actions, than that the review of which is now before us. Coming into Parliament as the opponent of the American war, and the administration by which it had been carried on, the advocate of Reform, and the friend of Burke, Pitt, Fox, and Lord Camden, who, differing as they did on many points, all belonged to the party of progress, he could not watch unmoved the sad results of the downward course of liberty, so called, in France, and the transplantation to the soil of other countries of seeds which were already producing on their native soil a growth, the poisonous nature of which was but too plainly evident. In his own loved country the influence of the principles which had been imported from France was already productive of most baneful results. It is important to the proper understanding of the course of Mr. Wilberforce, and at the same time, interesting as well to the student of human nature as to the reader of history, to exhibit some of the first fruits of these principles, which gave the earnest of the fearful harvest which must be reaped unless their progress was checked thus early.

"I can not omit," writes Mr. Wyvill, "to communi-

cate to you by the earliest opportunity what I have heard since I came here concerning the disposition of the lower people in the county of Durham. Considerable numbers in Bernard Castle have manifested disaffection to the constitution, and the words, 'No King,' 'Liberty,' and 'Equality,' have been written there upon the Market Cross. During the late disturbances amongst the keelmen at Shields and Sunderland, General Lambton was thus addressed: 'Have you read this little work of Tom Paine's?' 'No.' 'Then read it—we like it much. You have a great estate, General; we shall soon divide it amongst us.' 'You will presently spend it in liquor, and what will you do then?' 'Why, then, General, we will divide again.'" "At Carlisle," writes Dr. Milner, "we had many reports concerning tumults and sedition, and the affair seemed to be of considerable magnitude. Some few gentlemen, I understand, are disposed to favor French principles, and I am exceedingly sorry to find that Mr. Paley is as loose in his politics as he is in his religion. He has considerable influence in promoting this sort of work by his conversation, which has a strong tendency to destroy all subordination, and bring rulers of every description into contempt."

The same apprehensions were excited amongst sober-minded men in all parts of the country. "Immense pains," he heard from Leeds, "are now taken to make the lower class of people discontented, and to excite rebellion. Paine's mischievous work on 'the Rights of Man' is compressed into a sixpenny pamphlet, and is sold and given away in profusion. One merchant in this town ordered two hundred of them to be given at his expense: you may see them in the houses of our journeymen cloth-dressers. The soldiers are every-

where tampered with ; no pains are spared to render this island a scene of confusion."

All this was sufficiently alarming ; while the danger was increased by the probability of a French war, which must necessarily add to the burdens of the people, and so further the designs of the revolutionary faction. With his eyes fully open to these evils, he took a calm and sober view of the amount of danger.

"To you," he tells Mr. Hey, "I will frankly own, that I entertain rather gloomy apprehensions concerning the state of this country. Not that I fear any speedy commotion ; of this I own I see no danger. Almost every man of property in the kingdom is of course the friend of civil order, and if a few mad-headed professors of liberty and equality were to attempt to bring their theories into practice, they would be crushed in an instant. But yet I do foresee a gathering storm, and I can not help fearing that a country which, like this, has so long been blessed beyond all example with every spiritual and temporal good, will incur those judgments of an incensed God, which in the prophets are so often denounced against those who forget the Author of all their mercies." "Your letter," he writes again, in answer to a detail of facts, "and accounts I have received of the state of other places, have convinced me that there is more cause for alarm than I had apprehended. From my situation, I feel loaded with responsibility. I am considering, and shall consider diligently, what is best to be done ; and I pray God to give me wisdom to discern, and courage and perseverance to walk in the path of duty. I own to you that what throws the deepest gloom over my prospects is the prevailing profligacy of the times, and above all, that self-sufficiency, and proud and ungrate-

ful forgetfulness of God, which is so general in the higher ranks of life. I think of proposing to the Archbishop of Canterbury to suggest the appointment of a day of fasting and humiliation."

The same sober estimate of present appearances led him to check the exultation with which Mr. Hey regarded a temporary burst of loyalty in the town of Leeds. "'God save the King' was sung, with a chorus of three cheers after each verse, by the whole meeting, the most numerous I ever saw upon any such public occasion—about 3000 in number. The populace paraded the streets until night came on, carrying an image of Tom Paine upon a pole, with a rope round his neck which was held by a man behind, who continually lashed the effigy with a carter's whip. The effigy was at last burned in the market-place, the market-bell tolling slowly. I never saw so quiet a mob; a smile sat on every face; the people went peaceably home; no outrage, no opprobrious language, but 'God save the King' resounded in the streets. A happy change in this town." "I rejoice to hear that so much unanimity prevailed at Leeds," was Mr. Wilberforce's answer, "but I do not build much on such hasty effusions: this one word in reply to yours."

In the midst of this state of affairs, Parliament met. In common with some other friends of the administration, Mr. Wilberforce was convinced that it was the true policy of Great Britain to avoid continental alliances, and to hasten peace with the new government of France; and he gave full credit to Mr. Pitt himself for an earnest desire for this result. But war having been declared by the French Convention, for a time Mr. Wilberforce sustained the ministry, because he felt that it was the duty of a faithful subject to do nothing need-

lessly to throw difficulties in the way of the acting government, and in the belief that peace could be obtained more promptly and satisfactorily if the war was conducted with vigor, than if a temporizing policy were pursued. In this course he was sustained by a large majority of the reflecting part of the English people, and by the conviction that, as it was the interest of Mr. Pitt to cultivate peaceful relations, he would be ready to listen to overtures to that end. When, however, he found that the views of the ministry were becoming more and more alienated from those which had been entertained by them at the commencement of the struggle, and that Pitt was too high in his demands, he felt constrained to act in the independent manner he had marked out for himself at the beginning of his religious course, and though in opposition to the dictates of friendship, to vote against the policy of the ministry. This was a painful step for him to take, but was made easier by his previous consistency. Overtures to raise him to the peerage, and thus elevate him to a position in the House of Lords, had been made to him; and so common was the impression that this would be done, that application had been made to him for the preparation of his robes. His large fortune removed one great obstacle to this action, and would have placed him above all suspicion of mercenary action in his subsequent course. The example of his friends was not wanting to sanction the change, as, of a club of forty members of Parliament, known as "Independents," he was the only one, except Mr. Bankes, who did not accept the offers of the ministry, and fall into traces as members of the House of Lords.

Upon this subject he remarks, in a review of his life at a later period: "I can not deny that from

associating with men of the world, and hearing their principles, and calculations, and prospects, the ideas of aggrandizement would sometimes present themselves to my mind, and court my adoption. Various gentlemen were raised to the Upper House, whom the partiality we feel where we ourselves are in question, might excuse my considering as having no better pretensions than myself to such an elevation: and besides the solid advantages of a permanent seat in the legislature, the securing of which involved the possessor in no expense or trouble, the Upper House appeared from various considerations to afford a more favorable field for bringing forward religious and moral improvements, the neglect of which—I had almost said the entire forgetfulness of them—has long appeared to me to be the grand defect of all our modern statesmen, (for the last century.) How different in this respect are they, though blessed with the light of Christianity, from the great legislators of antiquity, in whom the conservation or improvement of the national morals was always the primary object of their care! My fortune, too, was greater than that of some of those who were raised to the peerage; and at that time I thought it far the most probable that I should never enter into married life. But a little reflection beat down at once all such worldly appetencies. Since there could be no possible plea of a public nature, my exaltation would appear, and truly appear, to arise solely from my own request, and therefore would not merely have exhibited the show, but the reality, of my carving for myself, (if I may so express myself,) of being the artificer of my own fortune; whereas the true Christian, deeming it to be his duty to pursue the course that will be most agreeable to the will of God, endeavors to discover the path of duty

from the indications of the Divine will, to be collected from the passing events and circumstances, considered in combination with his own qualifications and dispositions: his grand inquiry continuing always the same, how he may best promote the glory of God, and secure his own salvation and that of those whose interests are consigned by Providence to his care.

“Independently, however, of all religious considerations, it appeared to me that no little injury had been done to the credit and character of the House of Commons by the numerous peerages that were granted to men who had no public claims to such a distinction, and whose circumstances clearly manifested that borough or parliamentary interest was the basis of their elevation: hence the inference formerly to be drawn from the support of Commoners of large landed property, that the ministers who enjoyed it enjoyed also the esteem and confidence of the public, was no longer to be drawn; nor were such men entitled to more credit for the independence and purity of their political support than the representatives of the most ordinary boroughs. Various were the instances of country gentlemen of family and fortune, who appeared for a time to be honoring government by their support, sometimes in opposition to their family habits or political connections, when at length out came the Gazette, proclaiming the explanation of their conduct, or at least bringing it into doubt with those who were disposed to suspect the purity of politicians. An example therefore appeared to me to be required of a contrary kind, nor could it be exhibited more properly than in the instance of one who, having been some time member for the greatest county in England, and being also the personal intimate of the Prime Minister, might be



supposed likely to have been able, if he had made the endeavor, to succeed in obtaining the object of his wishes. Nor could the world, always sufficiently acute in discerning the faults and infirmities of those who profess to have more respect than ordinary for religion, have failed to notice the inconsistency of eagerness for worldly aggrandizement in one, whose principles ought to have moderated his desire of earthly distinctions, and to have rendered him even jealous of an advancement which would be likely to augment his temptations, and thereby increase the danger of his making shipwreck of his faith.

“If such were my conclusions in the circumstances in which I was then placed, how much have they been strengthened since I have been blessed with a family! No one who forms his opinions from the word of God can doubt, that in proportion to a man’s rank and fortune, the difficulty of his progress in the narrow road and his ultimate admission into heaven is augmented; and no Christian can possibly doubt its being a parent’s first duty to promote his children’s spiritual advancement and everlasting happiness; but were the comfort in this life only, the object in view, no one at my time of life who has contemplated life with an observant eye, and who has looked into the interior of family life, can entertain a doubt that the probability of passing through the world with comfort, and of forming such connections as may be most likely to insure the enjoyment of domestic and social happiness, is far greater in the instance of persons of the rank of private gentlemen, than of that of noblemen, who are naturally led to associate with people of their own rank—the sons being led to make fortune their primary object in the forming of matrimonial connections, that they may be able to

maintain their stations in society. As for the daughters, private gentlemen of moderate fortunes, and clergymen, and even still more mercantile men, have few opportunities of cultivating an intimacy with them, and are afraid of venturing upon a connection for life with partners whose opinions and habits have been formed on a scale disproportionate to the resources of people of moderate fortunes."

When Parliament met in December, 1792, he declared, while he supported the ministry, he "considered war at all times the greatest of human evils, and never more pregnant with injury than at the present moment, but he supported the proceedings of the ministry, as the most likely means of preserving peace." It was not indeed till a year had elapsed that he found himself obliged to take open ground of opposition, and it was with great reluctance that he brought himself to oppose a minister, of whose integrity and talents he had so high a value, and with whom he had so long lived upon terms of the most intimate private friendship. The difference between them arose gradually; though even from the beginning of the war he was not fully satisfied with the conduct of administration. Though Mr. Pitt's was not a "war system," yet he was, in Mr. Wilberforce's judgment, too much guided in its commencement by his own sanguine disposition, hitherto untempered by any disappointment. "It will be a very short war," said Mr. Pitt and his friends, "and certainly ended in one or two campaigns." "No, sir," said Mr. Burke when this language was addressed to him, "it will be a long war, and a dangerous war, but it must be undertaken." Mr. Wilberforce was alive to its perils, but not convinced of its necessity. "Not that," he thought, "peace could be

a state of as much security as the term 'peace' had commonly implied, but as far the less of two evils. Though at the commencement of the war I could deliberately declare that we were not the assailants, and therefore that it was just and necessary; yet I had but too much reason to know that the ministry had not taken due pains to prevent its breaking out." In the debate, therefore, upon the King's message, which intimated the necessity of some military preparations in consequence of the murder of the King of France, he had resolved to declare his persuasion that it was the true policy of this country to continue strictly upon the defensive; that the delirium which now distracted France would probably pass over by degrees, and that she would then see the folly of provoking a war with Great Britain, in addition to the continental storm which was already gathered round her. "I was actually upon my legs to open my mind fully upon the subject, when Pitt sent Bankes to me, earnestly desiring me not to do so that day, assuring me that my speaking then might do irreparable mischief, and pledging himself that I should have another opportunity before war should be declared."

The week passed away, and in spite of Mr. Pitt's assurance, there had been no opportunity upon which he could state his sentiments. By an incident to which his whole parliamentary experience could furnish no parallel, the House was compelled to adjourn every successive day without entering upon other business, because there was not a sufficient number of members present to make a ballot for an election committee. Meanwhile, war was declared by the French against England and the United Provinces, and when hostilities had actually begun, "I deemed it," he says, "the

part of a good subject not to use language which might tend to prevent the unanimity which was so desirable at the outset of such a war." Yet he was not satisfied with the tone held by the administration. "Feb. 12th. Message on the war—vexed at Pitt and Dundas for not being explicit enough." "Our government," he wrote long after to Mr. Hey, "had been for some months before the breaking out of the war negotiating with the principal European powers, for the purpose of obtaining a joint representation to France, assuring her that if she would formally engage to keep within her limits, and not molest her neighbors, she should be suffered to settle her own internal government and constitution without interference. I never was so earnest with Mr. Pitt on any other occasion, as I was in my entreaties before the war broke out, that he would declare openly in the House of Commons, that he had been, and then was, negotiating this treaty. I urged on him that the declaration might possibly produce an immediate effect in France, where it was manifest there prevailed an opinion that we were meditating some interference with their internal affairs, and the restoration of Louis to his throne. At all events, I hoped that in the first lucid interval, France would see how little reason there was for continuing the war with Great Britain ; and, at least, the declaration must silence all but the most determined oppositionists in this country. How far this expectation would have been realized, you may estimate by Mr. Fox's language, when Mr. Pitt, at my instance, did make the declaration last winter, (1799.) 'If,' he said, 'the right honorable gentleman had made the declaration now delivered, to France, as well as to Russia, Austria, and Prussia, I should have nothing more to say or to desire.'"

Yet while he condemned impartially the errors of the minister, he was ready to defend him from all unmerited censure, and when the war had actually commenced, and circumstances had thus prevented his openly opposing Mr. Pitt, according to his general rule he supported the King's government whenever he was able. His mode of life was much what has been described in the preceding year. Retiring often to Clapham for solitude, "the very prospect of which," he says, "even for a single afternoon, evidently mends me, fixing and solemnizing my mind ;" and while cultivating more and more the company of those who lived habitually in the fear of God, he maintained his usual intercourse with general society. "Venn preached an excellent introductory sermon—I received the sacrament, and had much serious reflection. Oh! may it be for good! I renewed all my solemn resolves, and purpose to lay afresh my foundations." "Mr. Cecil came to dinner, and *tête-à-tête* with him; having sent away Burgh for that purpose, according to our social contract. Much pleased with Cecil—he is living like a Christian. Oh! that I were like him!" "I have much the same confessions to make as heretofore, yet I hope, on the whole, I have of late read the Scriptures with more attention, and preserved on my mind rather a more constant sense of God's presence. My chief faults to-day, amongst innumerable others, have been a want of self-denial, too little real respect for the excellent of the earth, too few aspirations, impatience under provocation, and not sufficient kindness to my servants." "Expecting Muncaster, meaning serious discussion; when sent for by Henry Thornton to town, on the state of public credit, etc.—then to Pitt's with and for him. A sadly interrupted day." "To Battersea with the two Venns—they with

me all day—profitable conversation—Venn talked of M. the backslider. Oh! may I beware!” Such are the passing entries in his diary, giving us as it were a photographic impression of his character.

## CHAPTER XIII.

IN the year 1793, we find him occupied in another undertaking of vast importance. When viewed merely in its political and commercial relations, the East-India Company is one of the most influential of all those great agencies which have been called into existence by British enterprise, and have grown into full development under the fostering influence of the British Government. Great as are the evils inherent in its constitution, and enormous as is the guilt accumulated under its administration, no one can look with an unprejudiced eye at the whole course of its proceedings, or take a deliberate estimate of the result, balancing the good and evil, without acknowledging that it has been made the agent—often the reluctant and unwilling agent, it is true—for the accomplishing purposes of great blessing to man. The renewal of the charter of this Company has always called out much opposition, and at each successive period, much modification of its character has been introduced. At this period it was determined to take from the Company the power by which it had arrested all efforts for the extension of the blessings of Christianity to the millions of heathen nations under its control. After having “studied the subject with strenuous and persevering diligence,” and consulted long and earnestly with the Archbishop of Canterbury, and Charles Grant,

whose practical knowledge derived from long residence in the East, was absolutely necessary in forming his plans, he introduced into the House a declaration acknowledging it to be the peculiar and bounden duty to promote by all prudent and just means the religious improvement of the native Indians, and followed it up by resolutions for sending schoolmasters and chaplains throughout India, which passed through a second reading, thus giving every reason to anticipate its final adoption. The spirit in which he acted may be seen in the following extract from his diary :

"Sunday, 19th. Scott morning. Cecil afternoon. Called at Grant's—Miss More there. The hand of Providence was never more visible than in this East-Indian affair. What cause have I for gratitude, and trust, and humiliation!" "My time is contracted, and my eyes bad, yet I must record the grace and goodness of God in enabling me to be the instrument of carrying through the East-Indian clauses. Never was His overruling providence more conspicuous than in the whole of this business. Oh! let me remember that Judas was used as an instrument with the rest of the twelve disciples, and that many will say: 'Have we not prophesied in Thy name?' to whom He will answer: 'Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity.' This affair gives me fresh occasion to discover the pride of my own heart. How properly is Grant affected! yet let me take courage. It is of God's unmerited goodness that I am selected as the agent of usefulness. I see His overruling power. I go to adore His wisdom and goodness, to humble myself before Him, and to implore His forgiveness for Christ's sake. Amen."

His resolutions were defeated, however, at this time, through the powerful influence and hostility of the



India Company, and the treachery of Mr. Dundas, (afterward Lord Melville,) who had promised his support. The following extracts from his diary will show the feelings with which he prosecuted the work:

Upon "the 24th, House on the East-India Bill: I argued as strongly as I could, but too much in my own strength." "It is not meant," he said, "to break up by violence existing institutions, and force our faith upon the natives of India; but gravely, silently, and systematically to prepare the way for the gradual diffusion of religious truth. Fraud and violence are directly repugnant to the genius and spirit of our holy faith, and would frustrate all attempts for its diffusion. . . To reject this measure would be to declare to the world that we are friends to Christianity, not because it is a revelation from heaven, nor even because it is conducive to the happiness of man, but only because it is the established religion of this country. In India we take equal care of Hindooism; our enlarged minds disdain the narrow prejudices of the contracted vulgar; like the ancient philosophers, we are led by considerations of expediency to profess the popular faith, but we are happy in an opportunity of showing that we disbelieve it in our hearts and despise it in our judgments. Beware how this opinion goes abroad. Think not that the people of this land will long maintain a great church establishment from motives of mere political expediency. For myself, I value our Established Church as the means of preserving for us and for our children the blessings of the true religion; and I well know that to spread such a notion would be to inflict on it a fatal stroke."

In spite of this appeal he lost all the practical part of the resolutions he proposed. "My clauses thrown

out—Dundas most false and double; but, poor fellow! much to be pitied.” “The East-India directors and proprietors,” he tells Mr. Gisborne, “have triumphed—all my clauses were last night struck out on the third reading of the Bill, (with Dundas’s consent! this is *honour*,) and our territories in Hindostan, twenty millions of people included, are left in the undisturbed and peaceable possession, and committed to the providential protection of—Brama.” “How mysterious, how humbling, are the dispensations of God’s providence!” was his own private meditation. “I see that I closed with speaking of the East-India clauses being carried, of which I have now to record the defeat; thrown out on the third reading by a little tumult in the court of proprietors. Oh! may not this have been because one so unworthy as I undertook this hallowed cause, (Uzzah and the ark,) and carried it on with so little true humility, faith, self-abasement, and confidence in God through Christ? Yet where can I go but to the blessed Jesus? Thou hast the words of eternal life—I am no more worthy to be called thy son; yet receive me, and deliver me from all my hindrances, and by the power of Thy renewing grace, render me meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.”

It was in the midst of these arduous and absorbing public engagements that he entered seriously upon the project which had been long engaging his thoughts, of addressing his countrymen on their estimate and practice of religious duty; and when the close of the session of Parliament set him free from the immediate pressure of occupation, he withdrew for recreation to his lodgings near Bath, taking with him the Rev. Mr. Venn. While there, he commenced a tract on this subject, which gradually grew on his hands till it was ultimately pre-

sented to the world in the shape of his "Practical View of Christianity." Part of the recess of Parliament was spent with his friends at Rothley Temple, and Yoxall Lodge, and part also at his lodgings at Battersea Rise, near London. The entries in his diary not only speak of constant effort to do all to the glory of God, but manifest a steady growth of that peace which passes understanding, which God bestows on His faithful servants. That he was not free from vexatious trials, and yet was enabled to maintain his entire independence and Christian sincerity, is evidenced by the following incidental correspondence.

Mr. —, whose devotion to the great cause of Abolition had been indefatigable, was desirous of procuring the promotion of his brother to the rank of captain in the navy through the influence of Mr. Wilberforce. That influence had been exerted as far as it could be used by an independent man, but had been ineffectual. Under these circumstances Mr. — addressed to him a letter of complaint, from which the following sentences are extracts :

"My opinion is that my Lord Chatham has behaved to my brother in a very scandalous manner, and that your own timidity has been the occasion of his miscarriage in his promotion."

"I think Lord C. may be said to have acted scandalously, etc. . . Yet, after all, my opinion is that my brother's miscarriage is to be attributed to your own want of firmness. I can have no doubt but you have frequently written to my Lord Chatham, and this with singular zeal and warmth, on the subject, but you have not, I apprehend, waited on him often, or insisted on his promotion in strong language. He has told you of difficulties, and you have been satisfied ; though other

persons with infinitely less interest than yourself, have got promotions the next day. Will you tell me that if you went to my Lord Chatham and insisted upon it, it would not be done? Will you say that if Lord C. said to the Lords of the Admiralty: 'There are many members of Parliament who have this young man's promotion at heart,' that he could have been resisted? And yet you can not command your point. I never will believe but that your own want of firmness is the true reason why my brother has not succeeded before. You will observe that I give you credit for having a great desire of serving him, and perhaps for having expressed yourself by letter in his behalf in a stronger way than for any other man; but letters will not do; and unless personal applications be made, you will not serve him."

To these solicitations Mr. Wilberforce replied:

*To ———.*

"DEAR SIR: Your letter reached me when in the very act of leaving Bath; where, after paying a visit to a friend by the way, I arrived on Saturday evening. I find as usual an accumulation of packets, but yours claims the precedence; and I sit down to reply to it without delay. To say I have read it without emotion, would be to go beyond the truth; but certain it is, that the perusal of it has moved me less than might perhaps have been expected. The fact is, I am used to such remonstrances. It is the mode wherein I am accustomed to be addressed by people who, having for themselves or their friends expected the favors of Government in consequence of my solicitations, have had their too sanguine hopes disappointed or deferred: they always, like you, seem rather to approve of one's deli-

cacy in the general, but claim a dispensation from it in their own particular instance. This is language against which a man must arm himself who is resolved to maintain his independence. I am always prepared to expect it, and though habit has not rendered me insensible to its selfishness, it makes me hear it without surprise; and yet, to speak more correctly, I had thought you in a good degree exempt from this common infirmity, and from the esteem and affection I feel for you, it is not without regret that I discover my error. I am willing, however, to persuade myself that your tender solicitude for a beloved brother has beguiled you into the adoption of sentiments which in your cooler judgment you would be the first to condemn. I can not argue the point with you at length; I have not leisure for this, and still less have I eyesight, for I need not say this is a letter wherein I can not employ my amanuensis; but I will suggest those principles on which I rest the propriety of my conduct—principles which seem for once to have escaped your recollection.

“You acknowledge, ‘you have no doubt of my having frequently written to my Lord Chatham, and this with singular zeal and warmth, on the subject.’ Again, you ‘give me credit for having a great desire for serving your brother, and perhaps for having even expressed myself by letter in his behalf in a stronger way than I have done for any other man:’ but, ‘I have not, you apprehend, waited upon him often on the subject, or insisted on his promotion in strong language.’ ‘It is my want of firmness which is the true reason why your brother has not succeeded before;’ and, ‘Will I tell you that if I had gone to Lord Chatham and insisted on it, it would not be done?’ etc.

“Now need I enter into a regular argument to prove

the vicious nature of the principles on which all this proceeds? Principles which, however, too much acted upon, and even sometimes avowed in the world, I must fairly tell you I abhor, have ever disclaimed, and will resolutely and systematically oppose and discountenance. I think it really will be enough for you to read such sentences in the hand-writing of another person to become conscious of their real nature and character. If indeed you saw me proceeding in this way in other instances, if you saw me making favorite exceptions to my stricter rule, you might have reason to complain; but you must, or at least you may, know that the reverse is the fact, and that I have adhered, as I will continue to adhere, to my own system in the case of those with whom I am the most nearly connected, or who most warmly support me in my election struggles; . . . a species of obligation this, which according to the plan of making one's political situation subservient to one's personal convenience, is held to convey a claim to a particular return. To your own mind let me appeal; I am warranted in so doing, not only by what I know of your general sentiments, but by what you say in this very letter, of your having been and your still being prevented from asking any favor of this sort, lest it should seem, if granted, to have the appearance of a reward for your own labors. Why are things thus to change their natures and their names accordingly as you or I are in question? Why is that, which is in you proper delicacy, timidity and want of firmness in me? Why are you to have the monopoly of independence? Is it less valuable to me than you, and less deserving of regard, less suitable to my circumstances, less ornamental to my character, less essential to my usefulness? Considering all the peculiarities of my condition and

fortunes, is not this general duty of a public man more urgent in mine than almost in any possible instance? And how criminal should I be, if I were to truck and barter away any personal influence I may possess with some of the members of administration, which ought to be preserved entire for opportunities of public service!

"But I will enlarge no further on this topic. Let me assure you, however, that strongly as I have condemned some parts of your letter, I am obliged to you for the freedom with which you have spoken of my own conduct; and though you say, 'I shall not consider it as at all serving my brother's promotion,' I believe you do me the justice to think that it will not obstruct it; in truth I may make myself easy on this head, because had you not thought thus, you would not have sent it, for it was not certainly to injure your brother's cause with me that you took up the pen, nor yet solely for the purpose of sowing dissensions between friends, or of wounding my feelings by a useless attack on the conduct of those with whom I was living in habits of intimacy. Be this as it may, my line is clear; I have, as you confess, your brother's promotion sincerely at heart, and I will exert myself for him as much as I think I ought, but I must neither be seduced nor piqued into doing more. I will say no more. I hope I have not said too much: perhaps, indeed, I should have been less warm, if the attack had not been made on me in a quarter, where expecting only what was kind and affectionate, I had been the less armed against any thing of a hostile nature: but I was prompted to write thus freely not only because I thought it due to my own character, but because I wished rather to discharge what was in my mind than to let it smother in

silence, as being less likely to interrupt the cordiality of our connection; for unfeignedly do I return your assurance of sincere esteem and regard. We have long acted together in the greatest cause which ever engaged the efforts of public men, and so I trust we shall continue to act with one heart and one hand, relieving our labors as hitherto with the comforts of social intercourse. And notwithstanding what you say of your irreconcilable hostility to the present administration, and of my bigoted attachment to them, I trust if our lives are spared, that after the favorite wish of our hearts has been gratified by the abolition of the Slave Trade, there may still be many occasions on which we may coöperate for the glory of our Maker, and the improvement and happiness of our fellow-creatures.

"I remain, my dear sir, very sincerely yours,

"W. WILBERFORCE.

"*Battersea Rise, Aug. 19, 1793.*"

Session after session of Parliament he still devoted himself with unflinching perseverance to the prosecution of his efforts to procure the abolition of the slave trade, and both there and during his retirement, and in his visits to his friends, he labored diligently to cultivate his own growth in grace, which is marked as much by the humiliation he records for his shortcoming and failure to attain that "perfection after which he longed," as by the record of his attempts to teach others the doctrines of the Gospel, for which purpose he availed himself diligently of every opportunity. He even contemplated taking advantage of the pleasure the Prince of Wales had frequently expressed in his company, for a visit to Windsor Castle, with the intention of making it an occasion for religious conversation. Mature reflec-



tion caused him to omit this, however, and the recess of Parliament in 1794, was devoted to the preparation of the Essay on Christianity. As the time for the re-assembling of Parliament approached, he laid even this aside, and gave himself to the study of the state of public affairs especially with reference to the French war.

The changes which had taken place in the condition of France, resulting in the establishment of what he considered a more settled government, by the overthrow of Robespierre, gave him some hopes of the possibility of an accommodation of the difficulties between the contending nations, and he thought no opportunity for the procuring peace should be permitted to escape.

He set apart a day for fasting and religious exercises, for seeking God and praying for political direction, and for a blessing on his parliamentary labors and his country, while he sought every occasion by which he could obtain that information which would enable him to act with a proper judgment. Thus he says: "I am making up my mind cautiously and maturely, and therefore slowly, as to the best conduct to be observed by Great Britain in the present critical emergency. Oh! that there were in our rulers more of a disposition to recognize the hand of Him who inflicts these chastisements! 'This people turneth not to Him that smiteth them, neither do they fear Me, saith the Lord,' is but too applicable, I fear, to the bulk; yet I trust and believe, that we shall not be given over into the hands of our enemies. I beg your earnest prayers, my dear sir, for my direction and support."

He ultimately arrived at the determination to move an amendment to the address from the House to the King, and thus place himself in opposition to Mr. Pitt.

"It was not," say his sons, "merely his unwillingness to join in an open opposition to his early friend, which made him slow and cautious in arriving at this conclusion. There were other considerations which weighed even more strongly with him than the personal suffering with which his course must be attended. He could not take this ground without giving some countenance to a violent and unprincipled opposition, who had throughout condemned the war with all the asperity of party feeling. He feared, too, that he might increase the popular ferment which, wherever revolutionary principles had been actually disseminated, was ready to burst forth into open violence. He knew, moreover, that he could not hope to carry with him the mass of sober and well-affected people. They still thought the war necessary, and regarded all opposition to it as the effects of some Jacobinical tendency, or party motive. All these objections to his course he had well considered; but having made up his mind to the line of duty, he had courage to face them boldly. 'Parliament,' he says, 'meets on Tuesday. I am going to London to-morrow, and I am too little fortified for that scene of distraction and dissipation, into which I am about to enter; perhaps my differing from Pitt, by lessening my popularity and showing me my comparative insignificance, may not be bad for me in spiritual things. I would now humbly resolve to begin a stricter course, as becomes me on entering a scene of increased temptations—self-denial, attention, love to all, and good for evil; in particular to bear with kindness the slights and sarcasms I must expect from political causes. Oh! may God enable me to walk more by faith, and less by sight; to see the things that are unseen. Oh! may He fill my heart with true contrition, abiding humility, firm resolution in holi-

ness, and love to Him and to my fellow-creatures. I go to pray to Him, as I have often done, to direct me right in politics, and above all to renew my heart. It is a proof to me of my secret ambition, that though I foresee how much I shall suffer in my feelings throughout from differing from Pitt, and how indifferent a figure I shall most likely make; yet that motives of ambition will insinuate themselves. Give me, O Lord! a true sense of the comparative value of earthly and of heavenly things; this will render me sober-minded, and fix my affections on things above.'

"Tuesday, the 30th of December. A disturbed night—full of ambition. How small things confound human pride! why not such small things God's agents as much as locusts—worse this morning. Prepared Amendment at Banks's. Moved it in a very incoherent speech; good arguments, but all in heaps for want of preparation: had no plan whatever, when I rose.' The Amendment was seconded by his colleague Mr. Duncombe, who was followed by Mr. Banks; and though supported by many who had hitherto voted with the minister, it was negatived by a large majority."

The painful consequences which he had foreseen, attended his conscientious determination. It was with no ordinary feelings of annoyance that the minister had seen him propose an amendment to the Address. There were indeed but two events in the public life of Mr. Pitt, which were able to disturb his sleep—the mutiny at the Nore, and the first open opposition of Mr. Wilberforce; and he himself shared largely in these painful feelings. He had lived hitherto in habits of such unrestrained intimacy with that great man, he entertained towards him so hearty an affection, and the

spring of his life had been so cheered by his friendship, that it was with bitter regret he saw the clouds begin to gather which were to cast a comparative gloom and chilliness over their future intercourse. "No one," he wrote many years afterwards, with a warmth derived from his keen remembrance of his feelings at this time, "no one who has not seen a good deal of public life, and felt how difficult and painful it is to differ widely from those with whom you wish to agree, can judge at what an expense of feeling such duties are performed."

"Wednesday, Feb. 4th. Dined," he says, "at Lord Camden's—Pepper and Lady Arden, Steele, etc. I felt queer, and all day out of spirits—wrong, but hurt by the idea of Pitt's alienation. 12th. Party of *the old firm* at the Speaker's; I not there."

Nor was this the only painful circumstance attendant on his present course. He promoted overtures for peace, amongst other reasons, because he foresaw that the war must ultimately become unpopular, and then that Mr. Pitt's administration "would be succeeded by a faction, who knew that they had forced themselves into the cabinet; and feeling that they had no footing at St. James's, would seek it in St. Giles's." It was not therefore without pain that he found himself repeatedly dividing with this very party, and heard Mr. Fox, in a friendly visit which he paid him at this time, express a confident expectation of his speedy enrolment in their ranks—"You will soon see that you must join us altogether." Though he loved the frank and kindly temper of this great man, and though he duly honored his steady support of the abolition of the Slave Trade, he regarded his public principles with a settled disapprobation, which was never stronger than at this very moment. The same reasons also which led the opposi-

tion party to claim him as their own, rendered him suspected by the bulk of sober-minded men. "Your friend Mr. Wilberforce," said Mr. Windham to Lady Spencer, "will be very happy any morning to hand your ladyship to the guillotine." And others less violent than Mr. Windham, partook in a great measure of the same suspicions. "When I first went to the levee after moving my amendment, the King cut me."

Though their strong personal regard for him kept his constituents silent, he well knew that they disliked the course his conscience led him to pursue.

In this respect indeed he was exposed to difficulties which no party man can properly appreciate; for a party man is always immediately surrounded by those who agree with him, and in their good opinion he can intrench himself. But the politician who truly thinks for himself, and takes his own stand, must be assailed with unwelcome judgments on every side. Thus whilst at this very time he generally offended the partisans of administration by his amendment upon the King's Speech; by supporting the supply of due resources to carry on the war vigorously, if it must continue, and by defending the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act, he equally irritated opposition.

These trials were increased in his case by the expressed disagreement of almost all those personal friends with whom he most freely communicated upon political questions, and by the concurrent accounts they forwarded him from different parts of the country, of the disapprobation of his conduct generally felt by sober-minded men.

Yet none of these things moved him. The trial was indeed severe, but it did not shake his constancy; he calmly and steadily adhered to what he saw to be the

line of duty, neither deterred by opposition, nor piqued by unmerited reproach into irritation or excess. Upon the 6th of February, whilst he declared his disapprobation of its more violent expressions, he again supported so much of Mr. Grey's motion as tended to promote immediate pacification; and throughout the session he favored every similar attempt. During this anxious time he frequently laments the injurious effects upon his spirit, of a life of such constant occupation, and shows the watchful care with which he strove to mitigate the evils he detected.

"Easter Sunday. What a blessing it is to be permitted to retire from the bustle of the world, and to be furnished with so many helps for realizing unseen things! I seem to myself to-day to be in some degree under the power of real Christianity; conscious, deeply conscious of corruption and unprofitableness; yet to such a one, repenting and confessing his sins, and looking to the cross of Christ, pardon and reconciliation are held forth, and the promise of the Holy Spirit, to renew the mind, and enable him to conquer his spiritual enemies, and get the better of his corruption. Be not then cast down, O my soul! but ask for grace from the fullness which is in Jesus. He came not to call the righteous, but sinners; He was the friend of sinners. Look therefore unto Him, and plead His promises, and firmly resolve through the strength derived from Him, to struggle with thy sins; with all of them, allowing none of them in any degree; and to endeavor to devote all thy faculties to His glory. My frame of mind at this time seems to me compounded of humiliation and hope; a kind of sober determination to throw myself upon the promises of the Gospel, as my only confidence, and a composure of mind, resulting from a reliance on the

mercy and truth of God. I have also this comfort, that I feel love towards my fellow-creatures. Still I perceive vanity and other evils working; but Christ is made unto us sanctification, and our heavenly Father will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him. Wait therefore on the Lord. Wait, watch and pray, and wait."

But though Mr. Pitt was mortified and distressed, it is but justice to record the fact, that he did not allow this adherence to his principles, on the part of Mr. Wilberforce, to drive him into hostility to the favorite object of Mr. W.'s affections; since we find that when, in this same session of Parliament, he presented his usual resolutions on the Slave Trade, Mr. Pitt, though no longer a supporter of the cause, stepped forward to rescue it from the imputation of "French principles," and declared that he "knew not where to find a more determined enemy of such delusions than his honorable friend." All personal estrangement was indeed soon at an end, and the two friends met each other in social intercourse as though nothing had ever occurred to interrupt their long-continued co-operation in those affairs, which each regarded as the highest object of their earthly duty. So mild indeed was the spirit in which he acted, whilst his conduct was most decided, that there were not wanting some who asserted, that "there was a complete understanding between himself and Mr. Pitt, and that his opposition was only a pretext." "The Duchess of Gordon told me yesterday," he says, on the 13th of May, "that the Duke of Leeds, Duke of Bedford, and Lord Thurlow dining there the other day, the latter said he would bet (or did bet) five guineas that Pitt and I should vote together on my motion on Thursday for peace. This

shows he thinks there is a secret understanding between Pitt and me all this time."

But though thus temperate in the manner of his resistance, he was not beguiled by rekindling friendship into any unsuitable compliance with the wishes of administration. Truth he knew was to be valued above peace, and integrity of conduct above the harmony obtained by compromise. Upon the 21st of April he gave notice of a specific motion upon the continuance of the war; and even before this debate came on, he was compelled, upon another subject, to oppose the wishes of the minister. Mr. Pitt at this time proposed to raise the income of the Prince of Wales greatly above all former precedent. Upon the 14th of May he opposed this grant in the House of Commons, in a speech which was warmly commended, and which bears, in the imperfect record of the parliamentary debates, the impress of that high moral tone and that graceful eloquence which rendered it so effective. He dwelt strongly upon the actual distresses and discontented tempers of the times; and showed that though in a rude and barbarous age the Crown must be supported by the magnificence of its connections; in a time of universal luxury "it might win to itself a higher measure of respect and veneration by a certain chaste and dignified simplicity, than by vying with its wealthiest subjects in the number of its retainers and the magnificence of its entertainments." "It is more pleasing to me, sir," he continued, "to express gratitude than censure, and I rejoice thus publicly to declare the deep obligations under which we lie to their Majesties upon the throne for their admirable conduct, by which they have arrested the progress of licentiousness

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in the higher classes of society, and sustained by their example the fainting morals of the age."

Though he persevered in pressing a peaceful policy upon the House, he was well aware that the country was not with him. He bore patiently the present odium which attended on his measures; and within about six months, had the satisfaction of hearing from Mr. Pitt himself that he too was now convinced of the necessity of peace.

## CHAPTER XIV.

AFTER the close of the session he established himself at Battersea Rise, where, from its vicinity to London, he could transact county business, and maintain a useful intercourse with many friends whom he had scarcely leisure to see during the sitting of Parliament. "Old Newton breakfasted with me. He talked in the highest terms of Whitefield, as by far the greatest preacher he had ever known."

He was anxious to make use of his present leisure for cultivating habits of devotion. "July 15th. Spent the day in more than ordinary devotional exercises and fasting, and found comfort and hope some benefit. It seems something providential that, wanting to devote the day mainly to secret religious exercises, fasting, self-examination, humiliation, and supplication for myself and others, I should be left unexpectedly alone. The result of examination shows me that though my deliberate plans are formed in the fear of God, and with reference to His will, yet that when I go into company (on which I resolve as pleasing to God) I am apt to forget Him; my seriousness flies away; the temptations of the moment to vanity and volatility get the better of me. If I have any misgivings at the time, they are a sullen, low grumbling of conscience, which is disregarded. Although, therefore, I am not defective in exter-

nal duties to God, or grossly towards my fellow-creatures, but rather the contrary, (though here no man but myself knows how much blame I deserve,) yet I seem to want a larger measure, 1st, of that true faith which realizes unseen things, and produces seriousness; and, 2d, of that vigor of the religious affections, which by making communion with God and Christ through the Spirit more fervent and habitual, might render me apt and alert to spiritual things. My finding no more distinct pleasure in religious offices (*vide* David's Psalms everywhere) argues a want of the Holy Spirit. This might not be inferred so positively in every case, because different mental constitutions are differently affected. Mine I take to be such as are capable of a high relish of religion. I ought to be thankful for this; I am responsible for it; it will be a blessing and help well used, and if neglected it will increase my condemnation. Therefore let me cultivate my religious affections. I think it was better with me in this respect formerly; at least I felt then more religious sensibility. This was in part natural. Yet let me quicken those things which are ready to die."

Yet though he was thus disposed to condemn himself, his private journal bears the clearest marks of an unusual warmth of spiritual affections. "My eyes," says an entry at this time, "are very indifferent—tears always make them so, and this obliges me to check myself in my religious offices."

But while he watched carefully over the affections of his heart, no man's religion could be more free from that dreaming unreality, which substitutes a set of internal sensations for the practice of holy obedience. "This morning, (Sunday,)" he writes: "I felt the comfort of sober, religious self-conversation. Yet true

Christianity lies not in frames and feelings, but in diligently doing the work of God. I am now about to enter upon a trying scene. Oh! that God may give me grace, that I may not dishonor but adorn His cause; that I may watch and pray more earnestly and seriously."

The scene of difficulty to which he looked forward, was a series of visits which he was about to pay in Yorkshire. Complaints of the infrequency of his personal intercourse with his constituents had been forwarded to him by Mr. Broadley. "No man who has had occasion for your parliamentary assistance in his private business, or who considers the part which you take in public affairs, can possibly accuse you of neglecting, for a moment, the interests of your constituents. But all of them are not capable of appreciating the real value of their representative, and some of them miss the attentions which were formerly paid to them by Sir George Savile, who attended at the races and such other occasions. I think it would be well, if you would seize any proper occasion which may arise, for your seeing as many of your constituents as you can."

Upon the 23d of July he says: "Grant and Henry Thornton at breakfast, and we discussed what I ought to do. Yorkshire, in August or October? Decided upon August."

Upon the 4th of August he began a set of visits, which carried him through a great part of the county. His private entries abound in striking remarks upon character and manners, and show, in the strongest light, the care with which he watched over himself, and sought for opportunities to do good to others.

"There were few," say his sons, "who could resist his powers of conversation. It possessed, indeed, a

charm which description can but faintly recall to those who have listened to it. As full of natural gayety as the mirth of childhood, it abounded in the anecdotes, reflections, and allusions of a thoughtful mind and well-furnished memory: whilst it was continually pointed by humor of a most sparkling quality. Though any one admitted to the society of Mr. Wilberforce would have found him 'full of kindness towards all,' and would have witnessed certainly the workings of a spirit which abounded in benevolence; yet the most transient observer could not have failed to remark also the continual flashes of wit which lighted up his most ordinary conversation; harmless certainly, yet playing lightly over all he touched upon—the sports of a fervent imagination sweetened by a temper naturally kind, and chastened by the continual self-restraint of a conscience which would not bear the offense of giving pain to any. This was a natural endowment, and had been one great charm of his early years; but it was now carefully cultivated as a talent for his Master's use. It was this high sense of its importance, which led him so often to condemn himself. He was not contented to wait for the chance entrance of profitable subjects of conversation, he was diligent to make it useful.

“‘I have been dining out,’ says his diary, a few weeks after this time, ‘and was then at an assembly at the Chief Baron’s. Alas! how little like a company of Christians!—a sort of hollow cheerfulness on every countenance. I grew out of spirits. I had not been at pains before I went to fit myself for company, by a store of conversation topics, *launchers*, etc.’ These were certain topics carefully arranged before he entered into company, which might insensibly lead the conversation to useful subjects. His first great object was

to make it a direct instrument of good : and in this he was much assisted by his natural powers, which enabled him to introduce serious subjects with a cheerful gravity, and to pass from them by a natural transition before attention flagged. He was also watchful to draw forth from all he met, their own especial information, and for some time kept a book in which was recorded what he had thus acquired. This watchful desire to make society useful saved him from the danger to which his peculiar powers exposed him ; and he never engrossed the conversation. No one ever shone more brightly, or was more unconscious of his own brilliancy."

How carefully he watched over himself during these Yorkshire visits, is seen by numerous entries in his diary. "Aug. 9th. This rambling life amongst various people abounds with temptations to vanity, forgetfulness of divine things, and want of boldness in Christ's cause ; and I too readily yield to them. My health is not equal to this vagrarious kind of life, and at the same time preserving and redeeming time for serious things. Oh ! how much ought I to quicken the things which are ready to die ! This plan was undertaken from a conviction of its being right, but it sadly disorders and distracts me mentally." His blaming himself for want of boldness in the cause of Christ, is another instance of the high standard by which he tried himself. Not only did he at the moment steadily discountenance all unbecoming conversation, but he took private opportunities of reasoning afterwards with those who so transgressed his principles. In this very visit he addressed at length by letter, with plain and honest boldness, one gentleman of great influence, who (a clergyman) had in his presence taken the name of God in vain.

"Aug. 13th. This hurrying company life does not agree with my soul. How little courage have I in professing the gospel of Christ! How little do I embrace opportunities of serving the spiritual interests of my friends! How much insincerity am I led into! how much acquiescence in unchristian sentiments! I wish I had written my tract, that my mind might be clear; yet as all this more plainly discovers me to myself, it may be of service. If my heart were in a more universally holy frame, I should not be liable to these temptations. Remember they show your weakness, which, when they are away, you are apt to mistake for strength. Entire occasional solitude seems eminently useful to me. Finding myself without support, I become more sensible of my own wretchedness, and of the necessity of flying to God in Christ, for wisdom and righteousness, and all I want here and hereafter." "A quiet Sunday is a blessed thing; how much better than when passed in a large circle! My life is not spent with sufficient diligence, yet I hope I do some good by my conversation; and I thank God I this day enjoy a more heavenly-minded frame than common. Alas! how ignorant are people of Christianity."

From York he passed on into the West Riding, visiting Leeds, Halifax, and Huddersfield, receiving everywhere a cordial welcome, and winning back by personal intercourse those whom political difference had in any degree estranged.

## CHAPTER XV.

UPON the meeting of Parliament, it was soon evident that Mr. Pitt had adopted a pacific policy, and Mr. W. was therefore able, with perfect consistency of character, to appear once more as the supporter of government.

The evil humors which abounded in the state were already drawing to a head. The King was violently mobbed on his way to open Parliament; tumultuary meetings were held in the metropolis; whilst the most inflammatory publications were actively disseminated.—"Papers are dispersed against property. Prints of guillotining the king and others." In this crisis he deemed it needful to arm the executive government with extraordinary powers; and when, upon the 10th of November, Mr. Pitt proposed to bring in a bill for preventing seditious assemblies, he at once expressed his approbation of the step. Being convinced of the necessity of the measures proposed by Government, he labored to perfect their details. On the 11th, he "went to Pitt's, to look over the Sedition Bill—altered it much for the better by enlarging." Upon the 12th, he again maintained, in the House of Commons, in opposition to his colleague Mr. Duncombe, that the Bills did in truth "raise new bastions to defend the bulwarks of British liberty." "A meeting at Pitt's



about the Sedition Bill, after which supped with him and Mornington—my advice—Pitt's language: 'My head would be off in six months, were I to resign.' I see that he expects a civil broil. Never was a time when so loudly called on to prepare for the worst." "How vain now appears all successful ambition! Poor Pitt! I too am much an object of popular odium. Riot is expected from the Westminster meeting. The people I hear are much exasperated against me. The printers are all angry at the Sedition Bills. How fleeting is public favor! I greatly fear some civil war or embroilment; and with my weak health and bodily infirmities, my heart shrinks from its difficulties and dangers."

Yet, thoughts like these could not move him from the path of duty, upon which he had entered in the fear of God. "Let me look before me," he had said, at the commencement of the session, "and solemnly implore the aid of God, to guide, quicken, and preserve me. Let me endeavor to soar above the turmoil of this tempestuous world, and to experience joy and peace in believing. Let me consider what in former years have proved my chief occasions of falling, and provide against them. Let me remember the peculiar character of a Christian; gravity in the House, cheerfulness, kindness, and placability, with a secret guard and hidden seriousness. Let me preserve a sense of the vanity of earthly greatness and honor." This was the secret of his strength, and when the prospect before him was gloomy, "Put," he continues, "thy trust in God, O my soul! If thou prayest earnestly to Him, confessing thy sins, imploring pardon, and laboring for amendment, thou wilt be accepted, and then all things shall work together for thy good. God pro-

ted me from Norris, Kimber, and innumerable other dangers. He is still able to protect me, and will, if it be for my good." Popular odium could not shake this confidence, and to the two Bills he gave, in spite of all threats, his undisguised support, until they were carried; displaying at the same time the independence of his conduct, by objecting to what he deemed an unnecessary infliction of capital punishment, and speaking strongly, in condemnation of a pamphlet on his own side, which he thought a libel on the House.

The sentiments of Yorkshire were supposed to be hostile to these Bills. Already were its freeholders multiplied beyond all precedent by the increased numbers of the domestic clothiers: upon their support the opposition calculated largely; whilst the friends of peace looked with some alarm to the discontent which a partial scarcity could not but excite amongst them. "The Bills," wrote Dr. Burgh, "are obnoxious in this part of the world to an extreme degree." "The partisans of opposition," he adds, "have called upon the high sheriff to convene a public meeting. These things prognosticate a breach of that tranquil acquiescence, which for some time has subsisted in Yorkshire; and if in Yorkshire, so hard to be set in motion, the public mind be once expressed, we well know the sequel through all the rest of the kingdom." "The dissenters," adds another correspondent announcing the intended meeting, "have never forgotten you for opposing the repeal of the Test Act, and I am informed that they are expected to be there in support of opposition." In these expectations the high sheriff, so far coincided that he deemed it inexpedient to convene the meeting. "The assemblage of so large and unwieldy a body," he replied to the requisition, "would

only tend to raise riot and discontent." This decision Mr. Wilberforce regretted greatly: and when it was quoted with some triumph in the House of Commons as "a strong argument against the Bills," he declared at once that "he lamented the high sheriff's conduct, because it had prevented a full, fair, and free discussion of the subject. In spite of the triumphant hopes of his opponents, and the gloomy apprehensions of his friends, he trusted in the good sense of the Yorkshire freeholders.

Upon the refusal of the high sheriff to convene the county, the opponents of ministry had privately resolved to call a meeting, which they hoped to find wholly subservient to their views.

Together with the announcement of the meeting was circulated amongst the lower class of freeholders, a stirring appeal bearing Mr. Wyvill's signature: "Come forth then from your looms," was his summons, "ye honest and industrious clothiers; quit the labors of your fields for one day, ye stout and independent yeomen: come forth in the spirit of your ancestors, and show you deserve to be free."

The attempt would doubtless have succeeded, if the friends of order had not roused themselves with a promptitude which those who have reason on their side are not always willing to exert. An intimation of what had passed at York was received at Leeds in the course of Friday evening; and a few active men instantly met together, and resolved that the intelligence should be dispersed throughout the West Riding. On the Saturday accordingly the freeholders of various districts were assembled; and it was at once agreed to postpone all other business, and to respond to Mr. Wy-

vill's call, though not in the spirit which he had contemplated.

In London, of course, the state of things was utterly unknown. "When undressing at twelve o'clock on Saturday," says Mr. Wilberforce, "I received a note from Sir William Milner, saying that the York meeting was to be held upon Tuesday next; but I had given up all idea of going." He thought it quite impossible that a general meeting could be gathered on so short a summons; and to attend a party council of his enemies would have been manifestly foolish. Yet his suspicions were perhaps aroused by the communication of a friend, who came to tell him that "something extraordinary is certainly designed in Yorkshire, since — was seen to set out on the north road this morning in a chaise and four." Enough, however, was not known to show that his presence would be useful, still less that it was so far necessary as to justify his travelling upon the day which it was his chiefest privilege to give up to religious employments, until he was in his carriage on his way to church on Sunday morning. Just as he had got into it, an express arrived from Mr. Hey and Mr. Cookson, informing him of all that had been done, and urging him at all costs to be present at the meeting. "I sent immediately to Eliot, and then went there. He and I, on consideration, determined that it would be right for me to go; the country's peace might be much benefited by it."

Sending back therefore his carriage to be fitted for the journey, he went himself to the neighboring church of St. Margaret's . . . and then called on Mr. Pitt. Whilst they were still together, his servant brought word that his carriage could not be got ready so soon as was required. "Mine," said Mr. Pitt, "is ready, set off in

that." "If they find out whose carriage you have got," said one amongst the group, "you will run the risk of being murdered." So fierce had been the spirit of the populace in London, that the fear was not entirely groundless; and an appearance of the same spirit in the great cities of the North had led some amongst his friends to write to him, that "if he ventured down it would be at the hazard of his life." But it was not such apprehensions which had "disquieted" his thoughts; and when once satisfied that duty called him, he cheerfully began the journey. "By half-past two," he says, "I was off in Pitt's carriage, and travelled to Alconbury Hill, four horses all the way," two outriders preceding him; a provision then essential to a speedy journey, even on the great north road. After a few hours' rest, "I was off early on the Monday morning, and got at night to Ferrybridge. Employed myself all the way in preparing for the meeting." He had been supplied by Mr. Pitt with samples of the various works by which the fomenters of sedition were poisoning the public mind; and of such importance was his mission deemed, that an express was sent after him to Ferrybridge with further specimens. "Almost the whole of Monday," says his secretary, "was spent in dictating; and between his own manuscripts and the pamphlets which had followed him, we were almost up to the knees in papers." He reached Doncaster by night, and thence sent an express across to Leeds, to announce his arrival to his friend William Hey.

"DONCASTER, *Monday night, near 9,*

"*Nov. 30, 1795.*

"MY DEAR SIR: You and Mr. Cookson together, loosened my holdings yesterday morning, and forced

me out of London in the afternoon. I have made a forced march, which after a hard week is an effort, and, I thank God, have arrived thus far tolerably well. I am going forward, and my present intention is to be at York, about an hour before the meeting, unless my motions should be accelerated in consequence of intelligence I may receive as I advance. I trust you will come over, and if you do early in the morning, we may meet at Tadcaster. I am deeply impressed with a sense of the necessity of bold and decided conduct, but wish I had had more time to prepare for so trying a day as to-morrow. *Pray that I may be supported.* I hope and believe I am engaged in a cause pleasing to God. But I must stop. If any of my friends now absenting themselves would go to York, knowing of my intention to be there, send to them betimes.

"I will make no apology for desiring you may be knocked up. You who submit to it so often for personal interests, will not, I am sure, complain of it in a single instance *pro bono publico*. Kind remembrances.

"Yours affectionately,

W. WILBERFORCE."

"On Monday," says a private letter of the day, "there went through Halton turnpike above three thousand horsemen." Many came from Saddleworth, a distance of near sixty miles, spending a great part of the night upon their journey; and stormy as was the next morning, (Dec. 1st,) they still crowded the road from Tadcaster to York. "It was an alarming moment," says an eye-witness, "when these immense numbers began to pour in, while as yet we knew not what part they would take."

The want of any leader of acknowledged power was

deeply felt amongst the supporters of the constitution. The plans of the opposite party had been long matured, and their bands were marshalled under their appointed chiefs; but the friends of order had come suddenly together, and there was none to take the lead in their movements, or engage their general love of order in support of these necessary though obnoxious Bills. Just when this want was most acutely felt, Mr. Wilberforce's carriage turned the corner into Coney street. His approach was not generally known. "You may conceive our sensations," says a Leeds gentleman, "when he dashed by our party in his chariot and four a little before we reached York." He was received with exultation by the assembled concourse. "He arrived," says Mr. Atkinson, "at about a quarter to eleven, amidst the acclamations of thousands. The city resounded with shouts, and hats filled the air." "What a row," he said to his son, when quietly entering the city thirty-two years later by the same road, "what a row did I make when I turned this corner in 1795; it seemed as if the whole place must come down together."

Leaving his carriage he pushed through the tumult of the Guildhall, and soon appeared upon the hustings. Here he vainly attempted to prevail on Mr. Wyvill and the opponents of government to concur in an adjournment to the Castle Yard. "He hoped," he said, "to have met his opponents that day face to face, and convinced them of the groundlessness of their prejudices, if they were not prepared to shut up all the avenues to the understanding, and all the passages to the heart." But fair discussion was not their desire, and they refused to quit the Hall. He proceeded therefore without them to the Castle Yard. "It was perhaps

the largest assemblage of gentlemen and freeholders which ever met in Yorkshire." "Here," writes Mr. Atkinson, "we had three good speeches from Colonel Creyke, Mr. Spencer Stanhope, and Mr. Wilberforce. The last, I think, and so I believe think all that heard him, was never exceeded. A most incomparable speech indeed."

"Up betimes," is his own brief entry of this busy day, "and off to Tadcaster. There found all the West Riding was in motion. Got to York at eleven. Kindly received. In speech, foolishly did not go more into length." Yet his speech, though shorter than he had designed, proved signally effective. Mr. Wyvill did not hesitate to attribute the decision of the county to his personal efforts and influence.

His sons say: "His success had been complete; and it was the manifest reward of an unflinching obedience to the dictates of his conscience. When he left London, he was entirely ignorant of the temper of the great towns in the West Riding: his friends had warned him to expect their opposition: and this would certainly have cost him his seat at the approaching election. But he was determined to discharge his duty: and he returned beyond all expectation at the very highest wave of popular applause, and safe from all possibility of rivalry." "I never saw you but once," wrote a constituent long afterwards, "and that day you won my heart, and every honest heart in the county. It was at the York meeting. I never felt the power of eloquence until that day. You made my blood tingle with delight. The contrast of your address, and the mellow tone of your voice, of which not one single word was lost to the hearers, with the bellowing, screaming attempts at speaking in some others, was most wonderful. You



breathed energy and vigor into desponding souls of timid loyalists, and sent us home with joy and delight." Not less worthy of remark is the quiet thankfulness which threw a grace over his triumph. "With him," he told Mr. Hey, "it was matter of thankfulness to God that the enemies of peace and public order had been so discomfited. For myself, I should be thankful to have been so far honored as to have been made in any measure the instrument of the goodness of Heaven."

Friday after Christmas, he resolved "to set apart chiefly for religious exercises; fasting in my way, that is, being very moderate in food, which only does with me. I can not employ it so entirely, because I have some business about the poor which will not bear any delay. My chief reasons for a day of secret prayer are: 1st, That the state of public affairs is very critical, and calls for earnest deprecation of the Divine displeasure. 2dly, My station in life is a very difficult one, wherein I am at a loss to know how to act. Direction therefore should be especially sought from time to time. 3dly, I have been graciously supported in difficult situations of a public nature. I have gone out and returned home in safety: my health has not suffered from fatigue: and favor and a kind reception have attended me. I would humbly hope, too, that what I am now doing, is a proof that God has not withdrawn His Holy Spirit from me. I am covered with mercies. Return then unto thy rest, O my soul! for the Lord hath dealt bountifully with thee. 16th. Morning felt the fragrant impression of yesterday."

Before the close of the session he was confined entirely to the house by a very serious illness. "I have been indisposed," he says, "for ten days, and have had

my head a good deal weakened. My mind has, I thank God, been in an easy, tranquil state, reposing on the promises with a consciousness of deep demerit, yet trusting in God's mercy through Christ. I trust He will not spurn such a one from Him. I have lately felt, and now feel, a sort of terror on reëntering the world."

One of his colleagues in the representation of the county of York, had determined to retire; and in the election which ensued, though of the three candidates for the vacant position, none opposed Mr. Wilberforce, yet the struggle involved him in the trouble and expense of a contested election. He accordingly repaired to York, where he was most cordially received, and on Sunday, May the 29th, after having attended public worship in the Minster, he withdrew his thoughts from the bustling scene around him, to commune with himself. "This last has been a very hurrying week, little time for devotion, and Scripture neglected, for which I ought to have found time. But I thank God that I hope I have desired and wished for a quiet opportunity of communing with Him and my own heart, and to-day I adore with some degree of gratitude, that gracious Providence which has led me all my days in ways that I knew not, and has given me so much favor with men. It is His work. His be the glory. I hope I really feel how entirely it is His doing; that I have nothing of which I can boast, or be proud; that it is what I could never have effected by my own counsels or might. Oh! may I be enabled to be grateful, (duly, I can not be,) and to devote myself first to God's glory, and then diligently to the service of those constituents who are so kind to me."

The following week was spent in retirement. On the day of election he repaired to the Castle and addressed

the people in a speech of about twenty minutes' length, in the course of which he said: "I should but feebly execute my task if I were to attempt to give expression to the various emotions of my heart. I trust that I may say they are virtuous emotions; they are grateful; they are humble. I feel deeply impressed with your kindness; but above all, I recognize with thankfulness the hand of that gracious Providence which has caused my cup to overflow with blessings; which first raised me to an elevation I could never hope to have attained, has enabled me in some tolerable measure to discharge the duties of that important station, and disposed your minds to reward my services with so disproportionate a share of favor. You will not wonder at my being serious; even gratitude like mine is necessarily serious." Having been triumphantly elected, the entry of the day is closed with a reference to the riotous scenes connected with the "chairing," and, "Home about 7, and prayed; much affected, and shed many tears." After making a visit to his mother at Hull, who whispered at parting, "Remember me in your prayers," and a hasty progress among his constituents, he repaired to Buxton, a celebrated watering-place, in order to prosecute the preparation of his work on the Practical View of Christianity. From hence he wrote to Zachary Macaulay, then Governor of Sierra Leone:

"BUXTON, *July 3d*, 1796.

"MY DEAR SIR: Whilst I was taking a contemplative walk this morning, I rambled in thought to Sierra Leone, and my mind was naturally led to consider the providential dispensations of that Almighty Being, whose infinitely complicated plan embraces all his creatures, and who especially leads, and directs, and supports all those who in their different walks through this

multifarious maze of life, are pursuing in His faith and fear the objects which He has respectively assigned them. Here they often know little of each other, but they are all members of the same community, and at length they shall be all collected into one family; and peace, and love, and joy, and perfect unalloyed friendship, shall reign without intermission or abatement. Perhaps you will then introduce me to some of your sable subjects, whom I never shall see in this world; and I may bring you personally acquainted with others, to whom I have talked of your labors and sufferings in our common cause. 'The holy Church throughout all the world doth acknowledge Thee.' It always presents to my mind a most august idea—the praises of God arising from every nation, and kindred, and people, where His name is known, and blending, as they rise, into one note and body of harmony. How much ought this to stimulate us to enlarge the bounds of our Redeemer's kingdom!"

His life at Buxton was, as far as possible, that of a student. "Wednesday. Delightful weather. Thorn-ton went to Bagshawe's. I declined—caus'd waste of time. Resumed tract." And again: "On my tract in the morning with some spirit." "Talking over my tract with some friends, but do not find much help from them." "I have this week read Scripture (the Acts) constantly and seriously, and have had much new light thrown on them. I have felt at times, when walking, etc., a sense of the presence of God; but in company have been vain and gay, and I fear not duly attentive to the edification of friends. Oh! how different am I from what I advise others to be, and how much like the lukewarm Christians I am condemning!" "I have great reason,"

he wrote at this time to Hannah More, "to be thankful for getting through all the bustle of my election so well. It wore, so far as trouble and expense went, a much more unpromising aspect at one period. As it was, I do not suppose it will turn out to have cost me so much as £100; so you may draw on me the more freely."

"For the last month I have been drinking the waters of this place, and have received benefit. I have here resumed my pen, which had lain quiet near two years, and hope, if it please God to spare my health, that I shall finish my work (I hate the term, but don't know what to style it) this recess. Seriously and honestly, you expect too much from it. I do not like it so well as I did. However, if God pleases, he can give the increase. I rejoice to hear of your going on prosperously in your reforming operations. You have indeed cause for thankfulness at being so much blessed in your endeavors. What a delightful idea is that, which I trust will be realized, of your meeting from time to time in a better world, those whom you have been the means of enlightening with the knowledge of a Saviour, and the descendants, from generation to generation, of those whose hereditary piety originated under your *ministry*! 'Ride on prosperously.' It is the contemplation of a scene like this, which refreshes the mind, when wearied by Archduke Charles and General Moreau. Alas! no signs of humiliation. God scourges, but we feel it not."

Greater retirement would have been his choice. He wanted leisure to complete his long-projected work. "Sorry," he says when called to Hull by the indisposition of his mother, "to quit my tract, which I wished to finish this recess." The sight of the open infidelity

of France, and dissatisfaction with the state of things at home, made him more earnest to deliver speedily his solemn protest against the prevailing standard of religious principle and practice.

His Sundays were spent in comparative retirement; and before he quitted Buxton, more than one was specially devoted to a thoughtful review of "the notables in my life, for which I should return thanks, or be otherwise suitably affected."

## CHAPTER XVI.

PARLIAMENT met on the 6th of October, and was soon the scene of acrimonious controversy. The new overtures for peace met of course with Mr. Fox's approbation, but the Bills for putting the country into a proper state for resisting an expected French invasion were contested hotly. Against one of their proposed provisions Mr. Wilberforce protested in his private intercourse with Mr. Pitt. "It is intended, I observe," he heard from Mr. Stillingfleet, "that the supplemental corps of militia should be trained on Sunday afternoon; this comes rather to remind than to solicit you to use all your influence to prevent the intended evil. When a like proposal was made by Lord Shelburne many years ago, I wrote to the present Bishop of London to beg him to interfere with the other bishops to prevent it, and received a most proper answer, that the obnoxious clause would be omitted." The Bills themselves he supported strongly, and was more than once called up by the factious temper of the opposition. "I will not charge them," he said, Nov. 2d, "with desiring an invasion, but I can not help thinking that they would rejoice to see just so much mischief befall their country as would bring themselves into office." The words were resented fiercely; and he "feared that" he "had gone too far against opposition, but Fox very good-

natured." "What you said," writes Dr. Cookson, 'is what every body thinks, but what no one else had the courage to speak out.' In the midst of these harsh contentions, he writes to Mrs. Hannah More.

"HOUSE OF COMMONS, *Nov. 9, 1796.*

"MY DEAR MADAM: I have heard of the severe illness with which it has pleased God to visit you, and I have received pleasure from hearing of your recovery. I trust you will be spared to us, though I scarce know how to wish it, so far as you are yourself concerned, being persuaded that whenever you are called hence, it will be to the enjoyment of those pleasures which eye hath not seen nor ear heard. My dear madam, I think of you, and feel for you, with lively interest. How I respect your exertions, I would say to any one rather than to you; but to your feeling heart it will afford a cordial, to be assured that a friend looks through the bustling crowd with which he is hemmed in, and fixes his eye on you with complacency and approbation.—God knows that I wish to imitate your example, and to learn from you to seize the short intervals of tolerable ease and possible action, for acting for the suppression of vice and the alleviation of misery. May we each tread in our separate paths, and at length, having been graciously guided to our home through the mercy of our great Shepherd, may we meet in a better world, free from pain, and sickness, and sorrow, and live forever in the exercise of all those kindly affections, which are now the balm of life, though so often alloyed by the irritations to which we are here subject. I scribble amidst much interruption, but my heart is full of kindness to you, and I would not restrain my feelings.



"May God bless, and support, and strengthen you, is the hearty prayer of

"Yours, sincerely,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

It was by "seizing short intervals of possible action," that, with an infirm body, he himself accomplished so much. During the hurry of his present London life, he had not wholly laid aside the preparation of his work on Christianity. "I wish it was done. My time has been exceedingly frittered away in general talk, which yet was right. My bad health really renders it requisite for me to have much sleep; but with God's help I will lessen the time spent in discussion, and thus redeem what I can for solid work. Meant to go out of town for a few days that my tract may go on; but from the time of getting up till near four o'clock never quiet or free from people on business."

It was during the period that he was thus engaged in attention to the general interests of the nation, and devoting every leisure hour to the "tract," which he was anxious to finish for the Christmas recess, that he took a prominent part in the effort to induce the British Government to use its influence with that of Austria for the liberation of La Fayette from the dungeon of Olmutz. He thought the case one of peculiar hardship, and was the more ready to interfere from La Fayette's past exertions on the Slave Trade question. But he took this part unwillingly. "Never did I rise to speak with more reluctance, I expected all the ridicule which followed; and when Dundas, with a happy peculiarity of expression, talked of my Amendment as designed to catch the '*straagling* humanity' of the House, there was a perfect roar of laughter. However, I felt sure

that we were bound to use our influence with our Allies to mitigate as far as it was possible the miseries of war." It was some reward for this determined disregard of ridicule to receive long afterwards a special assurance of La Fayette's gratitude. "Tell him," was the message, "that in my life I never can forget the feeling with which I read that speech in the dreary dungeon of Olmutz."

The following was found among his papers, dated

" *March*, 1827.

" Among the various reasons for which our Saviour thought fit to forbid our judging each other, it was probably one, that we are most imperfect judges of the merit or demerit of the actions of others ; still less can we estimate degrees of virtue or of vice, of the strength or weakness of the moral principle. Much depends on the force of the temptation to which we are subjected ; and this force must obviously vary according to the different temperaments, characters, and principles of different individuals. That may be to one man a severe trial of the strength of the moral principle which to another would be none at all. One of the severest trials of the minor order, which I myself ever experienced, was on the occasion of General Fitzpatrick's motion for an address to the Crown, in behalf of M. de La Fayette.

" As the incident may have faded away from the memory of the present generation, or be lost in the multitude of the interesting occurrences of the last twenty years, it may be necessary to relate the circumstances which gave occasion for the motion in question. There is no man whose character has been painted in more different colors than that of M. de La Fayette ;

but it can scarcely be denied, that while many of the aspersions on his reputation owe their origin to rumor, and perhaps to party prejudice, his life exhibits many traits of a generous and patriotic spirit; not merely of an ardent love of glory, but of a mind zealous for liberty. And when we consider his youth, his rank, his connections, and the universal dissoluteness of morals and manners which then too commonly prevailed among the French nobility, it gave indication of a truly noble spirit, to quit the luxury and frivolity of a Court, and to plunge into the hardships, privations, and dangers of war in the cause, as he conceived, of an injured and oppressed people. Again, whatever may be reported of his behavior to the royal family of France, whenever that is considered it should be remembered that he well knew they reposed no confidence in him, but that they suspected and hated him; while he knew but too surely that had they escaped out of France, which was their settled and but too natural purpose, it would have been declared by the demagogues to have been effected by his connivance. It is notorious, that when the wretches who excited and directed the popular fury at Paris, manifested unequivocally their purpose of destroying the King and Queen, he exposed himself to great personal obloquy and danger in their defense. Once he quitted the army and came to the bar of the Convention, endeavoring in vain to stem the torrent of popular fury; and he was endeavoring to prevail on his soldiers to march to Paris, to rescue the royal family from the extremity of danger and degradation, when the Convention, well knowing his purpose, sent commissioners to treat with the army, and to prevail on them to arrest their commander. In vain did M. de La Fayette endeavor to call forth a bet-

ter feeling. He was but just able to effect his own escape, accompanied by a few of his officers, and protected by a small party of cavalry ; intending to find a refuge in some neutral territory. Passing through the Prussian territory, he, with his companions, was arrested, and shortly afterwards lodged in the dungeons of the fortress of Olmutz. Madame de La Fayette, a member of one of the most ancient and noble families in France, petitioning to be permitted to cheer the desolateness of his imprisonment, her request was granted only on the condition that she herself should become equally a prisoner ; a stipulation which, though she willingly submitted to it, does not on that account reflect less dishonor on the government which required such an engagement.

“ His harsh and cruel imprisonment had now lasted for four years, when, this country being then in close alliance with Austria, it was hoped that the influence of the court of St. James’s might be exerted for the humane purpose of prevailing on our confederate to release M. de La Fayette from his prison. Indeed the bitterness with which some of our leading politicians then publicly spoke of the leaders of the Revolutionary party, might not unnaturally cause it to be supposed that our court was implicated in the cruelty and disgrace of his unjust detention. All, therefore, who were anxious to exonerate their country from the imputation of participating in such unworthy counsels highly approved of General Fitzpatrick’s Address ; but it was supported by others on deeper and more general principles, (broader grounds.) Considering the mitigated spirit and practice of modern warfare as one of the most marked and truly admirable improvements effected by Christianity, even among those over whose

personal character and conduct its principles have little or no influence, and knowing but too well how easily the spirit of hostility, and the pretense of retaliation might lead to the universal prevalence of the ferocious principles (maxims) and practice of ancient warfare, they dreaded the first deviation of a professedly Christian court from the milder regimen of modern times. Many, therefore, who commonly took no part in politics, nay, many who had been among the foremost in condemning the wickedness and cruelty of the Revolutionary party, took a lively concern in M. de La Fayette's fate, and were warmly interested in the success of General Fitzpatrick's motion: but it was opposed with extreme bitterness by Mr. Burke and Mr. Windham, who charged on M. de La Fayette the abundant harvest of crimes and miseries, of which they alleged he had sown the seeds. They argued therefore that his sufferings, however severe, were no more than the just retribution for his early offenses. Others again who in no degree shared in these vindictive feelings, and who, it is no more than common charity to suppose, would have been glad to accede to the motion, were probably afraid of disgusting an ally, and thereby weakening a confederacy, which was not united by any very strong principles of cohesion. Not liking to take Mr. Bankes's ground, they, therefore, and more especially Mr. Dundas, afterwards Lord Melville, adopted a tone of ridicule; for even then, though much less I think than now, we had begun to be a very merry set of legislators.

"In proportion therefore to the degree in which little was to be said against the motion, it would be cried down by party violence. It was late in the day before I had an opportunity of delivering my senti-

ments, and when at last an opening did present itself, it was towards the close of the debate, when the patience of the House was exhausted, and when it was obvious that any one who should get up to defend the motion, especially any one not having the cry of a party to support him and the plea of sticking to a party to justify the part he should take, would experience a very sorry reception. It may be perhaps a confession, but I must frankly acknowledge, that the performance of an act of duty has seldom been set about at a greater cost of present feeling than by myself, when under these circumstances I rose, conscious that I should immediately draw on me the loud derision of a vast majority of a very full House of Commons. I was not deceived in my expectation ; and a rather felicitous expression of Dundas's, that the motion was chiefly to owe its support to straggling humanity, (the effect of the words, enforced by his peculiar tone and pronunciation,) produced a roar that has seldom been equalled. I am thankful that I was not weak enough to be deterred by foreseeing the consequences that were to ensue : but trifling as the occasion really was in the actual circumstances of the case, it was at the moment a severe trial of principle. . . . Transient, as on reflection I must be conscious, would be the feelings of the persons present, however strongly expressed, and little as I must have known I should permanently lose in reputation by the part I was about to take, it was nevertheless a great trial, etc., etc.

"It is one of the many instances in which an attentive reader of the New Testament will have occasion to remark that it was written by an accurate observer of the nature and feelings of man, that so much stress is always laid upon the feeling of shame ; and the

strength of its influence on our nature is continually noticed, not only in the epithet, cruel, attached to mockings, and the trial put on a level with the greatest sufferings that could be endured—but on many occasions in which it might have been expected that feelings of another sort would be specified, shame is that which is mentioned. Thus of our blessed Saviour it is said, He endured the cross, despising the shame. (See also other passages.) ‘I am not ashamed of the Gospel.’ ‘House of Onesiphorus, he was not ashamed of my chain.’”

An attack of severe illness interrupted for a time the course of his occupations, and at the desire of his physicians he went to Bath. On his recovery, he says, “It has pleased God of His great mercy to raise me up again from this attack, which threatened much; I then thought death probably near. Oh! that I might now better employ the time it has pleased God to allow me! May I be enlightened, and purified, and quickened; and having sadly wasted my precious faculties, even since my thinking more seriously, may I now more constantly act as an accountable creature, who may be called away suddenly to his reckoning.” This thought appears to have altered his intention of “putting off his tract” for a season of greater leisure, and he begins his stay at Bath with the determination of giving to it all the time which health and society allowed. “May I be enabled to engage in this busy scene with benefit to others, and without harm to myself. Oh! that I may feel the power of Divine grace in my heart to fill me with love of God and of my fellow-creatures! Oh! how much do I want! what unnumbered blessings do I receive at the hands of God, and how unequal is my return! Yet let

me remember He has encouraged us to apply to Him for His Holy Spirit. 'Let him that is athirst come.' Create then in me this sacred thirst, and satisfy it with that peace of God, which Thou only canst supply."

He reached Bath upon the 14th of January, and dined that day with the "Miss Mores, who are all kindness, and have provided me excellent lodgings. Lord Galloway and his son. Lord Galloway talked incessantly two or three hours—useful and active, and how much better disposed than most of his rank—fond of Jeremy Taylor. Mrs. Hannah More gave his son Doddridge's 'Evidences,' and strongly recommended 'Rise and Progress of Religion.'

"I find little time here," he complained, "for study, not above two or three hours in a morning hitherto, at tract. Calls, of which I make about sixty, and receive as many—water-drinking—dinings out with people, who expect me to stay—many letters to write;—all this leaves me, though hurrying much, and I hope not idling, very little time." "I should like to be with you," wrote Dr. Milner, whom he had pressed to join him, "but not to dine with a gang of fellows on the Queen's birth-day." But towards the end of his stay, though he still speaks of "daily dinings out, and between sixty or seventy people to visit," he "managed to be pretty diligent in the mornings on" his "tract, chiefly revising;" and by the time of his return to London it was ready for the printer.

Parliament reassembled upon the 14th of February, "amidst a state of things" which appeared "most unpromising." The prospect soon became still more gloomy. "I have been trying," he says on the 26th, "for several days to see Pitt. This evening Eliot came



in and told me of the Bank going to stop payment to-morrow. We talked much about it, and it disturbed my sleep at night."

*To Lord Muncaster.*

"11 o'clock, Sunday night.

"MY DEAR MUNCASTER: Eliot has just been with me to inform me that the Bank is to stop payment by command of government to-morrow morning. I have not been party to this counsel, but have of course suggested what has occurred to me to prevent riots, and secure a supply of provisions for the capital. I like to tell you bad as well as good tidings. O my dear friend! how this tumultuous state endears to one that heavenly peace, which, flowing from a source which worldly disturbances can not reach, may remain entire though all around us be in confusion.

"Yours ever affectionately,

"W. WILBEFORCE."

Two days afterwards he was chosen one of a Parliamentary Committee which took possession of the Bank, and examined into its solvency.

The resolutions with which he had entered upon this busy season, were: "To redeem time more; to keep God more in view, and Christ, and all He has suffered for us; and the unseen world, where Christ is now sitting at the right hand of God, interceding for His people. I would grow in love and tender solicitude for my fellow-creatures' happiness, in preparedness for any events which may befall me in this uncertain state. I may be called to sharp trials, but Christ is able to strengthen me for the event, be it what it may." These resolu-

tions he soon had to act upon in bearing a series of calumnious charges which were heaped upon him in a Cambridge newspaper. "I am abused for the grossest hypocrisy in Flower's paper, which states as a fact that I always had a prayer-book in the Pump-room, and said my prayers there." "There seems," says Dr. Milner, "to be something systematic meant against you. It really appears to amount to downright hatred and persecution, nor have I the least doubt that the person who writes in this manner would do you personal injury if he could with impunity. I have no question that he is some violent democratic Dissenter, and perhaps if you could unkennel him, some private anecdotes between you and him would turn up. The true way, however, is not to notice such a writer. He can do you no harm in any way. No man who does not hate you and your cause beforehand, will be induced to do so by such an intemperate account; and as to your book, they can not hurt it, though its contents will provoke them. God preserve you."

"My being moved by this falsehood," he says, "is a proof that I am too much interested about worldly favor. Yet I endeavor, I hope, to fight against the bad tempers of revenge and pride which it is generating, by thinking of all our Saviour suffered in the way of calumny. St. Stephen also and St. Paul were falsely accused. Let me humbly watch myself, so far as this false charge may suggest matter of amendment; and also I ought to be very thankful, that with the many faults of which I am conscious, it has pleased God that I have never been charged justly, or where I could not vindicate myself. How good is God! The business of C. off so well; I left it more to Him than I have often done in such cases. Be this remembered

for future practice. The real truth is, that at Bath I carried sometimes a New Testament, a Horace, or a Shakspeare in my pocket, and got by heart or recapitulated in walking or staying by myself in the Pump-room. I had got a Testament which had not the common dress of one on purpose. I can not recollect having had any movement of spiritual pride on this ground, but remember I thought it a profitable way. I got two or three of St. Paul's epistles by heart when otherwise quite idle, and had resolved to learn much Scripture in this way, remembering Venn's comfort from it. Thou, Lord, knowest my integrity, and it will finally appear; meanwhile, let my usefulness not be prevented by this report, or that of my book thwarted. What a blessed institution is the Sunday!"

He had been engaged about "his book" ever since his return from Bath. Immediately upon coming to town, he "had seen Cadell and agreed to begin printing;" and throughout the session its revision occupied his spare time. He corrected the press when business flagged in the committee room; and the index and errata were the work of midnight hours, when the debate was over.

Upon the 12th of April it was published—"My book out to-day." Many were those who anxiously watched the issue. Dr. Milner had strongly dissuaded his attempt. "A person who stands so high for talent," wrote David Scott, "must risk much in point of fame at least, by publishing upon a subject on which there have been the greatest exertions of the greatest genius." His publisher was not devoid of apprehensions as to the safety of his own speculation. There was then little demand for religious publications, and "he evidently regarded me an amiable enthusiast." "You

mean to put your name to the work? Then I think we may venture upon 500 copies," was Mr. Cadell's conclusion. Within a few days it was out of print, and within half a year five editions (7500 copies) had been called for.

The effect of this work can scarcely be overrated. Its circulation was at that time altogether without precedent. In 1826 fifteen editions (and some very large impressions) had issued from the press in England. "In India," says Henry Martyn in 1807, "Wilberforce is eagerly read." In America the work was immediately reprinted, and within the same period twenty-five editions had been sold. It has been translated into the French, Italian, Spanish, Dutch, and German languages. Its influence was proportionate to its diffusion. It may be affirmed beyond all question, that it gave the first general impulse to that warmer and more earnest spring of piety which, amongst all its many evils, has happily distinguished the last half-century.

As soon as his book was published, he set off for Bath, where he was followed by the congratulations of many of his friends.

Not a year passed throughout his after-life, in which he did not receive fresh testimonies to the blessed effects which it pleased God to produce through his publication. In acknowledging this goodness of his God, the outpourings of his heart are warm and frequent; though the particular occasions are too sacred to be publicly divulged:

*"Latons tacitum pertentant gaudia pectus."*

Men of the first rank and highest intellect, clergy and laity, traced to it their serious impressions of religion; and tendered their several acknowledgments in various

ways; from the anonymous correspondent "who had purchased a small freehold in Yorkshire, that by his vote he might offer him a slight tribute of respect," down to the grateful message of the expiring Burke. That great man was said by Mr. Windham in the House of Commons, when he had arranged his worldly matters, to have amused his dying hours with the writings of Addison. He might have added what serious minds would have gladly heard: "Have you been told," Mr. Henry Thornton asks Mrs. Hannah More, "that Burke spent much of the two last days of his life in reading Wilberforce's book, and said that he derived much comfort from it, and that if he lived he should thank Wilberforce for having sent such a book into the world? So says Mrs. Crewe, who was with Burke at the time." Before his death, Mr. Burke summoned Dr. Laurence to his side, and committed specially to him the expression of these thanks.

His correspondence not only at this time, but to the end of his life, continually brought before him evidences of the important influence exerted by this work. Soon after its publication, he received a letter from an anonymous correspondent who describes himself as having "had, as it is called, a liberal education," and as being "of the profession of the law;" after a most affecting and life-like description of his character as a child, "naturally contemplative," having "received his first impressions of religion with a warmth and zeal not very common," as having been hurried by his own feelings into all the extravagance of devotion, and thus "prepared to receive the charms and prejudices of the most absurd superstition." He then speaks of the temptations of youth to which he fell a victim, and of the consequent readiness with which he was led to the denial of re-

sponsibility, "until charmed by the wit of Voltaire, the sagacity and profound reasoning of Hume, and the eloquence and deep research of Gibbon," he was led to the very verge of the grossest immorality. At this juncture, "I first looked into your book, and I do confess I was induced to read it, more from a curiosity to know what you could say on a subject on which I had made up my mind, than from a desire of giving up principles which, though they could not bestow happiness, must, I thought, be retained, because as I imagined, they were adopted on the grounds of reason. But truth, divine truth, startled me; I felt its force: I felt by sad experience, that my philosophical system could not give happiness, because it did not produce virtue. I felt but for the timely reflections caused by your book, philosophy would have permitted me to commit a crime which might have embittered the remainder of my life. Well was it for me that it came to my assistance. \* \* \* Spare me any further detail, and accept my heartfelt gratitude: it is your due, for you have preserved me." While thus he saw one plucked from the pit of sensuality, and another brought from mere moral conformity to a vital knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, and made one of the most powerful and successful preachers of the Gospel, of our own or any other day; he secured also the highest commendations of the sages who had grown old in the knowledge of that truth, and whose brows were bound with living crowns, as noble witnesses for it in its power. Thus the venerable John Newton says to him: "I should stifle the feelings of my heart, were I wholly to suppress mentioning the satisfaction, the pleasure, the joy, your publication has given me. To God be all the glory. The best men are but instruments of His pleasure, and have no suffi-

ciency as of themselves, even to think aright. We can remember the time when you could not have written this book, and when I would not have read it, even if it had been put into my hands. The difference between what we are, and what we once were, and what many still are, is all of grace. According to His mercy He has saved us. \* \* \* \* Had you written upon any subject, my love and respect for you would have made me impatient to read. On the other hand, had your book come without a name, without any circumstance that could have led me to guess at the author, it would have engrossed my attention. I deem it the most valuable and important publication of the present age, that I have seen : especially *as it is yours*. There are many persons, both in Church and state, who from their situation, are quite inaccessible to us little folk : what we preach, they do not hear ; what we write, they will not read. But your book must and will be read ; and where else can they meet with a representation of real religion, so complete, so *totus, teres et rotundus*, so forcible, and yet so gentle, so candid, and yet so explicit ? The Lord has enabled you to honor Him, and now He has highly honored you. But chiefly my heart congratulates you on the goodness of the Lord, who has guided you by His wisdom, and supported you by His power ; that after moving for more than twelve years amidst the embarrassments, snares, and trials incident to your public life, you can publish such a book without any just apprehension of that retort, *Medice sana te ipsum*. You have long been a spectacle. Many have watched for your halting, and it is probable that many have attempted to throw you down. But the Lord has been with you." \* \* \* \* \*

Amidst these circumstances his sobriety of mind re-

mained unshaken. "I was much struck," says a friend who was with him whilst at Bath, "with his entire simplicity of manners. The place was very full; the sensation which his work produced drew upon him much observation, but he seemed neither flattered nor embarrassed by the interest he excited." The secret of this easy self-possession may be read in the entries of his private journal. "Bath, April 14th, three o'clock, Good Friday. I thank God that I *now* do feel in some degree as I ought this day. I trust that I feel true humiliation of soul from a sense of my own extreme unworthiness; a humble hope in the favor of God in Christ; some emotion from the contemplation of Him who at this very moment was hanging on the cross; some shame at the multiplied mercies I enjoy; some desire to devote myself to Him who has so dearly bought me; some degree of that universal love and good-will which the sight of Christ crucified is calculated to inspire. Oh! if the contemplation *here* can produce these effects on my hard heart, what will the vision of Christ in glory produce hereafter? I feel something of pity too for a thoughtless world; and oh! what gratitude is justly due from me (the vilest of sinners, when compared with the mercies I have received) who have been brought from darkness into light, and I trust from the pursuit of earthly things to the prime love of things above! Oh! purify my heart still more by Thy grace. Quicken my dead soul, and purify me by Thy Spirit, that I may be changed from glory to glory, and be made even here in some degree to resemble my heavenly Father."

He was soon recalled to London by a letter from Mr. Pitt, urging his attendance in Parliament. The summons was peculiarly unwelcome. "I doubt," he had



written to a friend six months before, "if I shall ever change my situation; the state of public affairs concurs with other causes in making me believe 'I must finish my journey alone.' I much differ from you in thinking that a man such I am has no reason to apprehend some violent death or other. I do assure you that in my own case I think it highly probable. Then consider how extremely I am occupied. What should I have done had I been a family man for the last three weeks, worried from morning to night? But I must not think of such matters now, it makes me feel my solitary state too sensibly. Yet this state has some advantages; it makes me *feel* I am not at home, and impresses on me the duty of looking for and hastening to a better country." But his sentiments had now undergone a considerable change. At Bath he had formed the acquaintance of one whom he judged well fitted to be his companion through life, and towards whom he contracted a strong attachment. "*Jacta est alea*," he says upon receiving her favorable answer, "I believe indeed she is admirably suited to me, and there are many circumstances which seem to advise the step. I trust God will bless me; I go to pray to Him. I believe her to be a real Christian, affectionate, sensible, rational in habits, moderate in desires and pursuits; capable of bearing prosperity without intoxication, and adversity without repining. If I have been precipitate, forgive me, O God! But if, as I trust, we shall both love and fear and serve Thee, Thou wilt bless us according to Thy sure word of promise."

A sudden call from Bath was, under these circumstances, what he would have gladly escaped.

In addition to the anxiety which the troubled aspect of the times, and the fact that Bonaparte had just made

a separate treaty of peace with the Continental allies of Great Britain, thus leaving him at liberty to turn the undivided power of the French nation against her, occasioned, there was one circumstance of a private nature, which caused him much annoyance. Whilst the naval mutiny was yet unappeased, discontents broke out amongst the military in the neighborhood of London. At this moment it was buzzed about that Mr. Wilberforce had written to the soldiers to express his sympathy, and had promised to bring their complaints before the House of Commons. So wide-spread was the rumor, that on the 13th of May he says: "Pitt sent to me about the soldiers," and "Windham" (Secretary at War) "called" on the same errand "in the course of the day." "I have no intention," was his answer, "of making any motion on the subject, but to do so at this time, and in such a manner, I should deem little short of positive insanity." Still it was asserted that an agent from himself had brought the message to the barracks, read aloud his letter, and actually shown to them his signature. Further inquiry brought out a solution of the imputation, highly characteristic of its object. One Williams, a needy, and as he thought, penitent man, had been recommended by Mr. Scott to the charity of Mr. Wilberforce. He was a clergyman of the Church of England, and had reduced himself to abject want by unprincipled excess: on his apparent penitence, he found in Mr. Wilberforce a generous supporter, who had continued privately to relieve his necessity, even after he had spit in his benefactor's face, and had been kept by a Bow-street warrant from further acts of violence. Finding him at last irreclaimable, Mr. Wilberforce had written to refuse him any further aid; and with this letter "wicked Williams"...such was his

usual appellation . . . had visited the barracks, pretended to read the feigned message, and then exhibited the signature.

Upon the 15th of May, his motion on the Slave Trade was again before the House; but the West-Indians maintained the ground which they had gained at the commencement of the session. They opposed the motion with a bolder front than usual. Mr. Wilberforce was ridiculed by Bryan Edwards, for declaring that by the gloomy aspect of affairs he was reminded of the slumbering wrath of Heaven, which the Slave Trade must provoke; he was taunted with the humanity of the Liverpool merchants, and the distresses of the chimney-sweepers. A majority of 82 to 74 against the measure, was only what had been anticipated from the existing House of Commons. "I wrote last night," he says the next day playfully in a letter to Bath, "whilst a very slow and heavy speaker was railing at me, to my lawyer about our settlement; so I did not want Christian love to keep me from falling out of temper, and I have been too long used to it to feel much disappointment on losing my motion."

"May 27th. Off after dinner, calling at Pitt's, and strongly urging him to make a liberal offer at first, to France; he convinced at length, that requisite to make immediate effort. I travelled on to Salt Hill. 28th, Sunday. Salt Hill. For some time past extremely hurried in London—but very poorly in health—never recovered since the influenza. Not able to sleep. Heat excessive, and I suffered from it more than I ever remember. Daily reports of the soldiery rising, and certainly some progress made. Pitt and the others now convinced that things *in extremis*, yet no apparent sense of God. I now feel exceedingly hunted and shattered."

On the 30th of May, 1797, he was married to Barbara Ann, eldest daughter of Isaac Spooner, Esq., of Elm-don Hall, in the county of Warwick, and his first visit with his bride was to Mrs. Hannah More.

"Received at Cowslip Green with great kindness—delightful day, and sweet ride. Sunday morning, as early as able, tour of the schools—Shipham, Axbridge, and Cheddar. Delighted with all he saw, Cheddar in particular—a delightful scene, when old people collected together at afternoon reading. Home at night, after a pleasant drive." Already, at the expiration of the first week from his marriage, he condemns himself, "for not having been duly diligent," and on the next day he set out again for London.

"Let me now," he says on his return to London, "commence a new era, guarding cautiously against all infirmities to which I am personally, or from circumstances, liable; and endeavoring to cultivate all opportunities. I go to prayer; may the grace of God give me repentance. Fix, O Lord! my natural volatility; let not Satan destroy or impair these impressions. I fall down before the cross of Christ, and would there implore pardon and find grace to help in this time of need. Let me use diligently and prudently to Thy glory all the powers and faculties Thou hast given me. Let me exhibit a bright specimen of the Christian character, and adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things. Let me go forth remembering the vows of God which are upon me; remembering that all eyes will be surveying me from my book, my marriage, etc.; that my political station is most important, my means of doing good numerous and great; my cup full of blessings, spiritual above all. The times, how critical! Death perhaps at hand. May God be with me for Christ's sake."

He was summoned to Hull soon after, by the sudden death of Dr. Clarke, who had married his only sister, and spent three weeks in cheering his aged mother and sorrowing sister.

Though the circumstances of his family saved him from the necessity of paying visits, yet he had little leisure. "Late morning hours and early dining, many calls, a vast many letters, and attention to my mother, prevent my getting any thing done. Reading the Bible with my wife." "I wish I could have a recluse, devotional, thinking birth-day, but that is impossible. On its return I have the utmost cause for self-humiliation, for gratitude, for grateful confidence, for earnest breathings after usefulness. I have no time to write, but let me use the few minutes I have in praying to God in Christ, the Author of my mercies, beseeching Him to hear me, to fill me with spiritual blessings, and enable me to live to His glory. My marriage and the publication of my book are the great events of the past year. In both I see much to humble me, and fill my mouth with praises. Let me resign myself to God, who has hitherto led me by ways that I knew not, and implore Him yet to bless me."

A rope-yard behind his mother's house was almost the only place where he could here take his quiet musings; and the pleasure he had found in it he would mention long afterwards with gratitude. "It is hardly in human nature, I fear," wrote Dr. Milner, the day after his departure, "to continue long as happy as you are at present." "My cup was before teeming with mercies," he himself tells Mr. Macaulay, "and it has at length pleased God to add the only ingredient almost which was wanting to its fullness. In this instance, as in many others, His goodness has exceeded my utmost

expectations, and I ought, with renewed alacrity and increased gratitude, to devote myself to the service of my munificent Benefactor. I am half ready to blame myself for thus descanting on the topic I have chosen, but it is the strongest proof I can give you of my friendship, that I have opened myself to you on a subject, on which, in speaking to a mere acquaintance, I should have been the least likely to dwell.

"We lately spent a week with our excellent friends, the Babingtons, who, to the blessing of their neighborhood, are now returned to the Temple. I own I am obliged to bite my cheek and set my teeth hard, when I quit such an enviable retirement to plunge into the bustle and wickedness of political life. But slave or free, every one is to remain and do his Lord's work in that state in which he was called; and so I fall to work again, though, I own, mine is one of the last trades which I should have selected. But life will soon be over, and we are assured that no situation presents temptations which the grace of God can not and will not enable us to resist, if we diligently seek it. Once more, my dear sir, farewell, and in the assurance of every friendly wish,

"Believe me always sincerely yours,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

Upon the 1st of November Mr. Wilberforce returned to London to be present at the opening of the session. The conduct of the French government during the negotiation of the summer months, convinced him that it was his duty as a loyal subject to strengthen the hands of administration; and on the first night of the session he made an effective reply to an extravagant eulogy upon the political conduct of Mr. Fox.

## CHAPTER XVII.

It was at the very period thus marked with new personal and private obligations, at the same time that he was oppressed with the anxieties of public affairs, that he was associated with Grant, Simeon, and Venn, in promoting a plan for increased missionary effort, which resulted in the establishment, in the year 1800, of the Church Missionary Society for Africa and the East. He ever entered cautiously into all such measures. It was not long before this that he had felt deeply interested in an effort to secure the appointment of his friend Eliot to the post of Governor-General of India knowing that his official influence would have been made subservient to the extension of Christianity. The ill-health of Mr. Eliot defeated this plan. Writing to Mr. Hey, on the subject, he displays his caution by the remark: "There is considerable probability of our being permitted to send to the East-Indies a certain number of persons. I presume we shall want ten or twelve, for the purpose of instructing the natives in the English language, and in the principles of Christianity. But the plan will need much deliberation. I really dare not plunge into such a depth as is required without previous sounding: lest instead of pearls and corals, I should come up with my head covered only with sea-weed, and become a fair laughing-stock to the listless and unenterprising."

He had always been deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of the due observance of the Lord's day as a period of rest from bodily and intellectual effort, and of spiritual refreshment, by public and private communion with God. At this time he entered, with active sympathy, into efforts made for the promotion of the better observance of the day; and his diary, at every stage of his career, abounds in entries of thankfulness for its privileges, and desire to profit by them. He did not permit the duties and pleasures connected with the marital relation to interfere with those which belonged to the position in which he felt he had been placed by Providence. His attention to his public duties was never more constant nor more self-denying, not only as member of Parliament, but in the various other spheres of action. To his sister he writes at this time: "The cause of my long silence has been really, as I believe, my having been more than even commonly busy. . . . How fast time and life too rolls away! It seems but a span since we were together at Hull; and more than six months have since gone over our heads. My hours have passed pleasantly; greatly indeed have I reason to be thankful for the signal blessing which Providence last year conferred upon me. My dearest wife bears my hurrying way of life with great sweetness; but it would be a sort of jail delivery to her, no less than to myself, to escape from the tumult of this bustling town, and retire to the enjoyment of country scenes and country occupations. But I am well aware that it is not right for me to indulge in such reveries. My business is cut out for me, and Providence has graciously blessed me with the means of being cheered under it; which means I should do wrong to pervert into a source of in-



dolent self-enjoyment, finching from my collar and refusing to draw my load because a little weary of being in the harness. At all times in which one feels this sense of weariness, and longs for quietness and peace, one should endeavor to make it subservient to the purpose of raising one's mind heavenward, and of establishing a practical feeling of the vanity and transitoriness of all human things, and of this life being but a passage, and our home that 'rest that remaineth for the people of God.' "

The duel between Mr. Pitt and Tierney on Whitsunday, May 27th, 1798, furnished an occasion for the exhibition at the same time of his firmness in principle and the calmness and discretion of his judgment. On the 30th he gave notice in the House of Commons of his intention to move an expression of disapprobation. In the evening he received the following letter from Mr. Pitt :

*To W. Wilberforce, Esq.*

"MY DEAR WILBERFORCE: I am not the person to argue with you on a subject in which I am a good deal concerned. I hope too that I am incapable of doubting your kindness to me (however mistaken I may think it) if you let any sentiment of that sort actuate you on the present occasion. I must suppose that some such feeling has inadvertently operated upon you, because whatever may be your *general* sentiments on subjects of this nature, they can have acquired no new tone or additional argument from any thing that has passed in this transaction. You must be supposed to bring this forward in reference to the individual case.

"In doing so, you will be accessory in loading one

of the parties with unfair and unmerited obloquy. With respect to the other party, myself, I feel it a real duty to say to you frankly that your motion is one for my removal. If any step on the subject is proposed in Parliament and agreed to, I shall feel from that moment that I can be of more use out of office than in it; for in it, according to the feelings I entertain, I could be of none. I state to you, as I think I ought, distinctly and explicitly what I feel. I hope I need not repeat what I always feel personally to yourself.

“Yours ever,

“WILLIAM PITT.

“*Downing Street, Wednesday,*

“*May 30th, 1798, 11 P.M.*”

The hope which had led Mr. Wilberforce, in spite of all his personal feeling, to give notice of his motion now deserted him. Instead of being able to carry a strong resolution against the principle of duels, through the general feeling which had been excited by an apprehension for the safety of Mr. Pitt, he found that the fear of censuring the minister would lead many to defend the system in order to screen the man. He began therefore to doubt the wisdom of persevering in his motion. “June 1st. To town to-day and yesterday, and back in the evening. Much discussion about duel motion. Saw Pitt and others—all pressed me to give it up. Consulted Grant and Henry Thornton, and at length resolved to give it up, as not more than five or six would support me, and not more than one or two speak, and I could only have carried it so far, as for preventing *ministers* fighting duels. June 2d. Being resolved, I wrote to Pitt to give it up.”

*To the Right Hon. William Pitt.*

"MY DEAR PITT: I scarcely need assure you that I have given the most serious and impartial consideration to the question, whether to persist in bringing forward my intended motion or to relinquish it. My own opinion as to the propriety of it in itself, remains unaltered. But being also convinced that it would be productive on the whole of more practical harm than practical good, and that it would probably rather impair than advance the credit of that great principle which I wish chiefly to keep in view, (I mean the duty of obeying the Supreme Being, and cultivating His favor,) I have resolved to give it up; and when thus resolved, I can not hesitate a moment in sending you word of my determination. At the same time, I shall be much obliged to you if you will not mention my resolution generally, though you may, where you may think it necessary; but for many reasons I do not wish it to be publicly known till it is heard from myself. The Speaker is the only person of our town friends, to whom I shall open myself at present.

"I am sure, my dear P., that I need not tell you that the idea of my being compelled by duty to do any thing painful or embarrassing to you has hurt me not a little; but I know you too well not to be sure that even you yourself would not wish me to be influenced by this consideration against the dictates of my conscience. I will only hint the pain you have been the occasion of my suffering on the subject itself, which I had intended to bring into discussion. I will only say, that whatever mischiefs may hereafter flow from it, will not be imputable to me. It is my sincere prayer, my

dear Pitt, that you may here be the honored instrument of Providence for your country's good, and for the well-being of the civilized world; and much more, that you may at length partake of a more solid and durable happiness and honor than this world can bestow. I am, and I trust I ever shall be,

"Your affectionate and faithful friend,

"W. WILBERFORCE.

"*Broomfield, Sat., June 2, 1798.*"

"Received an answer from Pitt that he was greatly relieved by my relinquishment—he seriously ill."

"Monday, June 4th. Staid away from court on account of motion impending. The King asked the Speaker if I persevered. Pitt told me the King approved of his conduct. 5th. To town. House—declared that I gave up my motion because no support."

It was not only in such instances that he displayed his entire superiority to all personal feelings. The same sense of higher responsibility compelled him to act with equal independence in refusing to exert the influence he was supposed to possess with the ministry to promote the appointment to offices, ecclesiastical as well as political, of those in whom his various personal friends were interested. On more than one occasion he was compelled by his sense of propriety to do violence to his private feelings of friendship, and thus subject himself to the liability to alienation of those whom he loved or esteemed. It was only on general grounds that he asked any favors of government, having learned by experience that "such things are only to be got by an earnestness and importunity very unbecoming my situation." But though thus careful in the use of his influence with government, fearful lest he

might be entangled in associations which would destroy his power of independent action, he investigated the condition of his private pecuniary resources only to derive, from a knowledge of his ability, an additional stimulus to more extended beneficence. Thus he writes to Hannah More: "But I am pressed for time, and have one point more on which I must detain you, I mean the extreme importance of your husbanding your strength. I have looked into the state of my finances, and am in good case in what respects this world. I can appropriate as large a sum as may be requisite for your operations. I am clear you ought to purchase ease, which is with you the power of continuing your exertions, though at a dear rate, by allowing yourself the accommodation of a carriage. Surely we know each other well enough to communicate on this or any other subject without embarrassment or reserve. You ought to permit the friends of your institutions to assist you with money to any extent which may be requisite for carrying them on. What signifies it in what shape and for what purpose the money is to be applied? In the composition and resolution of forces it all produces an effect in the required direction. It is really absurd that we who affect to be deeply interested for the maintenance of the system, should not give it the only support which our situation renders us able to afford. Each partner should supply that in which he most abounds: the moneyed, money; you and your sisters, what is far more valuable, and what no money can procure. Now do *act* if you are convinced."

And to another correspondent: "Never distress yourself, my dear Mary, on the ground of my being put to expense on account of yourself, or your near relatives; you give what is far more valuable than money—time,

thought, serious, active, affectionate, persevering attention : and as it has pleased God of His good providence to bless me with affluence, and to give me the power, and I hope the heart, to assist those who are less gifted with the good things of this life, how can I employ them more properly than on near relations, and when I strengthen your hands, who are always endeavoring to serve their best interest ? You may say to —, that on your account, I am willing to take the charge of Charles's education for two or three years." Whether it was by the agency of others, or by the personal application of his means to those who were in need, he annually gave away at least one fourth of his large income.

He was also about this time associated with several of the Evangelical clergy and laymen of the Church of England in an attempt to establish a periodical religious publication which should admit "a moderate degree of political and common intelligence," which resulted in the appearance in January, 1802, of the *Christian Observer*, a work which has now during more than half a century maintained its position at the very head of religious periodical literature. It was at one time proposed to commit it to the editorial care of the Rev. Thomas Scott, of whom Mr. W. remarks : "He is a man of whose strength of understanding, correctness of religious views, integrity, disinterestedness, diligence, and perseverance, I think very highly. He is systematically opposing the vices, both speculative and practical, of the religious world, and they are many and great, and likely to be attended with numerous and important mischiefs. But Mr. Scott is a *rough* diamond, and almost incapable of polish from his time of life and natural temper. He has not general knowledge nor

taste sufficient for such an office as you would commit to him." Thus abounding in labor in all the various fields of usefulness which presented themselves before him in the elevated position to which he had been allotted by that Divine wisdom which orders the goings of men, his health, feeble at the best, gave evident tokens of being much impaired, and he wrote to Mr. Hey :

"A serious return—of illness, availing itself of the very severe and cheerless north-eastern blasts, has stuck to me more obstinately than usual. This has compelled me to lessen the number of my working hours, and has crowded into them such a multitude of matters, that I have been quite unable to clear my way." This had enforced a "private resolution," which he tells Lord Muncaster he "had been forced to form, of giving up the dining system: for the evening is the only time when I can get an hour or two of uninterrupted quiet, and I can not, like Burgh, extend my working hours at pleasure; expend a copious stream of midnight oil, and then be as fresh the next day as if nothing had happened." This resolution withdrew him in a measure from general society. More than once he mentions in his journal, "quiet as having had some good effect upon his heart, in enabling him a little to realize unseen things, and live more in the fear of God." "I have been more able to bridle my passions, and be more meek and gentle, and really full of love."

These impressions he was most solicitous to deepen, setting apart from time to time a day for abstinence and meditation. "Saturday at Broomfield all day. I meant it to be a day devoted to God. The morning serious, by myself, though not so completely as I had wished. I had refused several friends, but Carlyle

came suddenly with offer about Lord Elgin, and compelled to see him. I have with some difficulty and management kept this day clear, to be set apart for humiliation and devotion, and such abstinence as my body will bear. I am now about to fall to self-examination, and confession, and humiliation; looking into myself; condemning myself before God, and imploring forgiveness for Christ's sake. Oh! what a terrible array of sins do I behold when I look back!—early renunciation of God; then, many years entirely sinful; then, since the good providence of God drew me forth from this depth of iniquity in the autumn of 1785, how little have I improved and grown in grace! Let me now humble myself, chiefly for forgetfulness of God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and invisible things; for ingratitude to God, though loaded with mercies, recalled by sicknesses; . . . a thousand gracious providences! I go to prayer, humbly throwing myself on the promised mercies of God in Christ." "Though, I thank God, I am less sensual than I was, yet I find my heart cold and flat. To-day I received the sacrament, but how dead was I! O God! do Thou enlighten me. May I attain what is real in Christian experience, without running into a sect, or party set of opinions."

On the recess of Parliament, he retired to the comparative quiet of Broomfield. "The recess," he says, "is beginning. Oh! may I spend it well, and try more and more to devote my understanding, and heart, and all my faculties and powers, to the glory of God and Christ, being more and more weaned from vanity, and the love of this world's praise; yet more and more active, useful, indefatigable, adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour. Oh! for more gratitude and love. Heard to-day of a clergyman in the Isle of Wight, to



whom my book was blessed. Oh! praise, praise!" "We trust," he wrote to Mr. Newton, who was leaving London for a while, "that you will not forget us in your rural rambles, for I doubt not you have many an oratory where the spreading foliage forms your canopy, and the natural sounds of the country join with you in a harmonious chorus of praise. Farewell, believe me ever affectionately yours."

"I could not be quiet yesterday," he says the day after his birth-day, "though I got a contemplative walk, and even to-day I have less time than I could wish for looking back through the year, and awakening pious gratitude for the multiplied mercies of God. How often have I been sick and restored! How few, if any, days of suffering, either bodily or mental! My wife and child going on well, and a daughter born (July 21st) and doing well. Instances repeatedly heard of my book doing good. How gracious is God through Christ, to fill my cup with blessings, yet not to lessen or commute in what is still more important!"

It was about this period, and during the prevalence of great distress among all classes, but especially the poor, caused by the scarcity of provisions, that he found himself called on to take an active position in opposing a measure which Mr. Pitt had been induced to adopt, which was fraught, in his opinion, with irreparable mischief, by encroaching on the liberty guaranteed to the Dissenters by the Toleration Act. "I am much grieved," he says, "at Pitt's languor about the scarcity. They will do nothing effectual. Great sufferings of the West Riding people. I dread lest God have given our government over to a spirit of delusion—that they should think of attacking the Dissenters and Methodists! I fear the worst. I am very doubtful if

we had not better have consented to treat. Chouans seem melted away—Russia gone—Austria too, perhaps. Pitt, I am convinced, has no trust in me on any religious subject. To see this design drawn out in a bill! Never so much moved by any public measure.”

This was the impression of a moment of despondency: for though one at least to whose opinion Mr. Pitt naturally deferred on questions which concerned religion, was continually on the watch to lessen Mr. Wilberforce's influence, it was still great, and in this very instance successful. “There are ideas,” he tells Mr. Hey, “of materially abridging the privileges enjoyed under the Toleration Act. I am persuaded that restraints would quicken the zeal of the Methodists and Dissenters to break through them, that prosecutions would be incessant, and that the prevalence of the persecuted opinions and the popularity of the persecuted teachers would be the sure result. I hope still that I may be able to prevent any strong measure from being brought forward. I am not at liberty to open to you.” Two days afterwards he writes: “All on the important subject on which I lately wrote to you, remains in statu quo; except that the Methodists have got to the knowledge of some measures being in contemplation, through Michael Angelo Taylor, at Durham. I have kept them quiet. I am more and more clear that if the measure does go forward, the effects will be most important.”

“I told Mr. Pitt that I was ready to assent to one restriction, namely, that no one should exercise the office of a teacher without having received a testimonial from the sect to which he should belong. This would put a stop to the practice which I am told prevails at Salisbury, and (as I heard from Mr. Jay, the dissenting minister) at Bath, of a number of raw, igno-

ant lads going out on preaching parties every Sunday. I fear the Bishop of Lincoln (this is whispered to your private ear in the strictest confidence) will renew his attempt next year. If such a bill as was lately in contemplation should pass, it would be the most fatal blow both to Church and State, which has been struck since the Restoration.

"I believe I before told you, and I do not retract the sentiment on further reflection, that I place more dependence on Mr. Pitt's moderation and fairness of mind, (though less in this instance than in any other,) than either on the House of Lords or Commons. In short, so utterly ignorant in all religious matters is the gay world, and the busy, and the high, and the political, that any measure government should propose would be easily carried. I find no success in my endeavors to convince my friends on the bench, of the expediency of facilitating the building of new churches with a right of patronage. More than once I have proposed in private, a general law to that effect; but it would answer no good end to bring forward such a measure in the House of Commons, without having previously secured support for it."

Among his private papers, there appears a full statement of the great service to religious peace which he rendered on this occasion. "A member of Parliament, who, on his accession to a large fortune, by his father's death, discontinued the practice of the legal profession, but who acted as a magistrate with a considerable sense of his own importance, got into a quarrel with a person who came to be licensed as a dissenting teacher. Finding the applicant very ignorant, and somewhat forward, he at first resisted the man's claim, but discovering that the law clearly entitled him to a license on paying the

specified fee of 1s. 6d., he warmly exclaimed, that if such was the law then, it should not so continue. Accordingly he considered how best to introduce some discretionary power to magistrates, in the granting or withholding of dissenting ministers' licenses. His purpose reached the ears of the Methodists and Dissenters of the city which he represented in Parliament, and he soon found that if he should persist in his endeavor, it would be at the expense of his seat. His intention had perhaps been rather the effervescence of the moment, than the deliberate result of that consideration which so serious a subject might well require. He set himself, therefore, to devise how best to get out of the difficulty, and through what medium I never heard, he actually prevailed on Mr. Pitt's government, indeed on Mr. Pitt himself, to adopt his measure. The precise nature of the regulations I can not recollect with certainty, but I am positively sure, that they tended materially to restrict the freedom hitherto enjoyed by Protestant Dissenters, and a fine for the first offense, and imprisonment for the second, were the sanctions by which they were to be enforced. The intelligence that some such measure was about to be proposed to Parliament, reached the ears of some of the dissenting ministers, from one of whom, I believe it was that I received the first intimation of the design.

"I lost no time in conferring with Mr. Pitt on the subject, but he had been strongly biased in favor of the measure by Bishop Prettyman, on whom I urged in vain the serious consequences that must infallibly ensue. I well remember stating to him my firm persuasion, that within a few weeks after the passing of the intended law, several of the dissenting ministers throughout the kingdom, most distinguished for talents

and popularity, would be in prison; and I urged on him, that even supposing them not to be actuated by a sense of duty, for which I myself gave them credit, or to be cheered by the idea of suffering for righteousness' sake, they would be more than compensated for all the evils of imprisonment by their augmented popularity. The Bishop, however, would not assent to my view of the case, and finding Mr. Pitt intended to bring the measure forward, I begged I might have a full confidential discussion of the subject. Accordingly we spent some hours together at a *tête-à-tête* supper, and I confess I never till then knew how deep a prejudice his mind had conceived against the class of clergy to whom he knew me to be attached.

"It was in vain that I mentioned to him Mr. Robinson of Leicester, Mr. Richardson of York, Mr. Milner of Hull, Mr. Atkinson of Leeds, and others of similar principles: his language was such as to imply that he thought ill of their moral character, and it clearly appeared that the prejudice arose out of the confidence he reposed in Bishop of Lincoln. I remember proposing to him, to employ any friend whose mind should not already have received a bias on either side, to visit the several places I had mentioned, to inquire into their characters, and to ascertain the principles and conduct of their adherents, adding my confident persuasion that both their moral and political principles would be found favorable to the peace and good order of society; indeed I went further, and alleged that they were in general friendly to his administration, from believing these to be promoted by its continuance. All, however, was of no avail, and all I could obtain from Mr. Pitt, was an assurance that the measure should not be actually introduced without his giving me another oppor-

tunity of talking the matter over with him. Happily that opportunity never occurred; of course I was in no hurry to press for it; and the attempt never was resumed; but some years after, when Lord Sidmouth's memorable bill was in progress, which excited such an immense ferment, and produced a vast number of petitions, by which it was defeated in the House of Lords, Lord Redesdale (formerly Sir John Mitford) stated, that he well remembered that during Mr. Pitt's administration a stronger than the bill then in progress had been in contemplation, and that he did not know why it had been dropped. I must say, considering every thing, I have always been extremely thankful for any share I had in preventing the introduction of this scheme."

It was at a period in which he was seeking some repose from public toils at Bognor Rocks, in the comfort of the domestic circle now enlivened by the cheerful presence of several children, and enjoying the pleasure of social intercourse with a congenial circle, including the Mores and Thorntons, that he says: "We are all, I thank God, pretty well, and living more quietly than common, to my no small satisfaction." A letter from Dr. Milner reached him, remarking: "Perhaps these wonderful smiles are for some future trial. Continue to watch." This very letter found him in deep anxiety, which he thus imparted to Hannah More:

"BOGNOR, *Sept.* 27.

"MY DEAR FRIEND: I am unwilling you should learn from any other pen, that it has pleased God to visit my dearest Mrs. Wilberforce with a very dangerous fever. I am told the final issue is not likely to be very speedy, but that from the violence of the outset,

I have every reason for apprehension, though not for despair. But O my dear friend! what an unspeakable blessing to be able humbly to hope that to my poor wife, death would be a translation from a world of sin and sorrow, to a region of perfect holiness and never-ending happiness! How soothing also to reflect that her sufferings are not only allotted but even measured out by a Being of infinite wisdom and goodness, who loves her, I trust! ay, better than a dear child is loved by an earthly parent. I am sure you will all feel for me, and pray for me, and for my poor dear sufferer.

"Mr. and Mrs. Henry Thornton are all kindness and consideration for us. I am not sufficiently used to sick-beds, and it is extremely affecting to me to hear her wildness and delirious distresses, and sometimes fancies, mixed with her usual kind looks and gentle acquiescence. May we all be ready, and at length all meet in glory; meanwhile, watch and pray, be sober, be vigilant; strive to enter in, and assuredly we shall not be shut out. I had used to say such words as these, not I hope, wholly without meaning; but how much more forcibly are they impressed on the mind by the near view of death to which I am brought! God bless you all. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, be with us all.

"Yours always,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

"You will, I am sure," he tells another friend three days later, "hear with no little emotion, that it has pleased God to visit my dearest wife with a very dangerous fever. I had, I own, nearly dismissed all hope. But to-day matters wear a more favorable aspect, though

Dr. Fraser, who is with us, (having most kindly hurried down on my first imperfect statement, which conveyed to his discernment the idea of no time being to be lost,) tells us not to be elated, but still to be prepared for the worst. What an unspeakable consolation and support is it in such a moment to entertain full confidence that my dearest wife has made her peace with God, and is not unprepared for the awful summons! I thank God I am enabled to submit to His chastisement (too much, alas! deserved) without murmuring, and I humbly hope with resignation, I would say cheerfulness and gratitude, to His holy will. He best knows what is good for us; and if our sufferings here serve in any degree, by rousing us from sloth, and urging us to cleave to Him more closely, to increase the happiness of eternity, well may we exclaim in the triumphant language of the apostle: 'Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.'

"But I must stop. I am sure you will feel for us. The Dean and the Stephens are come, and the Henry Thorntons, who were with us, are all kindness and assiduity. What a blessing to have such friends! Kindest remembrances. Under every circumstance, I am yours affectionately,

"W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S.—My dear wife has been delirious ever since we knew she was seized. How little could we have attended to her spiritual state if it had been before neglected, and we had wished to prepare for death! What a practical lesson to us all!"

"Wilberforce tells me," wrote his friend Henry Thornton, to Hannah More, "that he has written to



you a few lines on this distressing subject of Mrs. Wilberforce's illness. Poor fellow ! he cleaves now to his old friends, and he finds a relief in employing a little time in writing to them, which is what we encourage, and especially as the sick-room is not the place either for him or for her. He seems more softened and melted than terrified or agonized, and shows the truly Christian character under this very severe and trying dispensation."

The issue of the fever was long doubtful, nor was it before the 14th of October, that he was able to thank God for any decided improvement. The tone of his own feelings throughout this painful time, shows the height to which he had attained in the school of Christ. Truly he had learned to take patiently the loving corrections of his heavenly Father. "Mr. Wilberforce," writes Mrs. Henry Thornton, "has behaved *greatly*, if one may so say of a Christian; he is now very calm, and waiting the event with much submission and quietness." In his diary he says: "My mind, I thank God, is very composed. O Lord ! take not thy Holy Spirit from me: take away the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh; that under Thy chastisements, I may lift up to Thee a humble, reverential, and even thankful eye, and desire that Thy correction may work its due effect, and keep me closer to Thee for strength, and light, and warmth, and all things. Much affected and struck to-day in the address, Rev. 3, to the Laodicean lukewarm Church, (too much my own condition,) with the words of kindness at the close: 'As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten; be zealous, therefore, and repent.'" "I am much struck," he writes to a friend, with whom he was soon after called to sympathize, "by this fresh visitation. Alas ! we go on commonly in a course of

too uniform and uninterrupted comfort. Read St. Paul's list of sufferings. Yet let us praise God, and extract good from present evil, and turn temporary suffering into everlasting happiness."

Carefully did he scrutinize his own spirit when the hand of God was taken from him, lest he should lose any of the blessing of affliction. "I have heard," he writes to Mr. Hey, "of all your affectionate sympathy with me in my late heavy trial. God has in His chastisement remembered mercy; and my beloved wife is spared to me, and is gradually recovering her health and strength. May I improve from the discipline through which I have gone; but it is truly melancholy and humiliating to observe, how the strong feelings of the mind in the moments of suffering decay, and grow cold after it is over. This hardness of heart towards God, in spite of the uniform and unvarying dictates of the judgment, is a sad proof of corruption."

His feelings of sympathy were at this time strongly excited by the sufferings of the poor, on account of the scarcity, the result of a scanty harvest, which was so great as to call for most earnest endeavors for its relief, by private charities, as well as to demand the attention of Government, by the disturbances to which it gave rise. Mr. Wilberforce was recalled to his post of parliamentary labor, and placed on a committee of the House of Commons, appointed to devise and obtain some effectual relief. "I have not," he tells Lord Muncaster, "for one morning omitted to take my place at the committee, and that cuts such a solid lump out of the day as to leave the rest composed but of fragments."

"I have been using my utmost endeavors to impress the minds of ministers, and of my brother members, with a sense of the necessity of taking effectual steps

for the relief of the lower orders: and though thinking their measures too weak, I am by far the most urgent in pressing forward those very weaker measures, to the execution of which they proceed languidly and lukewarmly. It is really beyond expression vexatious to experience such indifference. Though the House of Lords concurred with us on Friday, Nov. 28th, in addressing the King to issue the proclamation, it was not issued until Thursday last; and nothing is yet done in consequence of it, though I have been daily pressing the extreme urgency of our communicating the disposition to economize, like an electric shock, by the promptitude and force of our proceedings." "All this wears an aspect of exhibiting a show to the country. But we should either do less or do better. Alas! my friend, Providence has not done with us, I fear! Not a word or a thought about God. We seem in general to recognize Him as little in His chastisements as in His mercies. How little does all seem, compared with His favor! May you and I, my dear friend, possess a share of it."

The year closed upon him in these employments; and early in the following spring he tells Mrs. Hannah More that he still has on him "the heavy burthen of obtaining relief for our starving manufacturers in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The callousness, the narrow and foolish wisdom of servilely acquiescing in Adam Smith's general principles, without allowance for a thousand circumstances which take the case out of the province of that very general principle to which they profess allegiance, is producing effects as mischievous as the most determined and studied cruelty. This is rather too strong, but not much. However, I must leave this topic, or I shall never have done. I send you

half a bank note for £50. I beg you, besides my ordinary debt, to regard me as your debtor for any sum you may call for, on account of the peculiar distress of the present times. I thank God that I am able, without inconvenience, to make an extraordinary exertion ; and as to keeping strictly within one's income at such a season as this, it is as unreasonable (not to say any thing of its wickedness) as it would be for a man to keep determinately to his ordinary rate of walking, when a hungry lioness was at his heels ; but we feel for our own safety more than for other's sufferings.

“ Mrs. Wilberforce, thank God, regains strength gradually. You hold out better than I expected ; but the tenement gives indications (mine also) that it will ere long fall to pieces, and enforces on the spirit within, the duty of providing a surer and better habitation. Farewell ; I am too much indulging my disposition to chat with you. Kindest remembrances.

“ Ever yours,

“ W. WILBERFORCE.”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

THE opening of the nineteenth century was dark and threatening. "What tempests," says the journal of January, 1801, "rage around, and how are we urged to seek for that peaceful haven, which alone can insure real security and happiness!" He writes

*To Lord Muncaster.*

"NEAR LONDON, *Feb.* 7, 1801.

"MY DEAR MUNCASTER: I have strange tidings to communicate. The King and his Cabinet have quarrelled concerning the emancipation (as it is called) of the Irish Roman Catholics—and Pitt, Dundas, Lord Grenville, Windham, and probably Lord Spencer also, and Lord Camden, are to go out of office.

"The King and Pitt part on affectionate terms. The King saying, that it is a struggle between duty and affection, in which duty carries it. I am vexed that some of the Cabinet whom I least *affect* are to continue."

It was well understood that more pacific councils were to be expected from the new administration, and many of his friends hoped, therefore, that Mr. Wilberforce would be included in its number. He himself just felt the influence of the eddy which was sweeping by

him. "I am too much for a Christian, yet not greatly, intruded on by earthly things, in consequence of these late political changes, and all the considerations which they call forth. I was for a little intoxicated, and had risings of ambition. Blessed be God for this day of rest and religious occupation, wherein earthly things assume their true size and comparative insignificance; ambition is stunted, and I hope my affections in some degree rise to things above." His views upon the slave trade differed too decidedly from those of the new Cabinet, to allow him to take office with them, and he continued, therefore, with unbroken cheerfulness his independent labors. His great present object was to relieve that distress, which the failure of the harvest, and the continuance of the war, had produced in the manufacturing districts. "Indifferent health alone prevented" him "from going down into the West Riding to ascertain facts" for himself; and his private aid was given so liberally, that he speaks of having "spent this year almost £8000 more than his income;"\* and as "thinking in consequence of giving up his villa for a few seasons." "I should thus save £400 or £500 per annum, which I could give to the poor. Yet to give up the means of receiving friends there, where by attending family prayers, and in other ways, an impression may be made upon them, seems a great concession. And with Broomfield, I can by management give away at least one fourth of my income. O Lord! guide me right. But there, or wherever else I am, O Lord! do Thou grant me Thy Holy Spirit to fill me with every Christian grace; love, joy, peace, long-suffering."

His efforts to promote this object were not limited to

\* The sum of £3173 is accounted for as bestowed during this year in charity.

plans and correspondence. While he wished that Government should make a direct appropriation for the relief of the poor, he realized the difficulty which would arise from the knowledge of the necessity for such action reaching the French, and wished that the "Government should relieve privately, some of the most distressed of the poor districts, afterward alleging that they did not do so publicly, for fear of producing mischievous effects abroad." And in the same letter to his friend Mr. Hey, he says: "I have been sending a supply of money to a few friends in different parts of the manufacturing districts of the West Riding, conceiving that in these times of extreme pressure, though an individual purse could do but little, yet that it might effect something, and that it was well to enable the clergy to be active and assiduous in the relief of the general distress. I have sent to Mr. P. and Mr. H. They I think will relieve their own country poor. I sent a trifle to Mr. A., but I thought that Leeds would be likely to fare better than almost any country place, from the number of affluent residents, and therefore that I had better direct my little stream towards a different spot. I have heard, however, that Pudsey, and its neighborhood, are in extreme distress, and that scarcely any merchants or gentlemen live in that parish. I have therefore resolved to beg you to apply any sum not exceeding £50 to their relief."

The summer was occupied with attendance on Parliament, where he pressed earnestly and perseveringly on the Government the duty of making some effort for the relief of the poor, especially in the manufacturing districts.

"Our dear and benevolent friend," writes Dr. Milner from Palace Yard, "absolutely exhausts his strength

on this subject. He is the most feeling soul I ever knew; and also the most patient and indefatigable in endeavoring to lessen the miseries of the people: and how he does get misrepresented and abused! But you may kick him as long and as much as you please; if he could but fill the bellies of the poor, he would willingly submit to it all."

Throughout this spring his diary contains many interesting notices of passing events. "Heard in the House of the King's being ill in the old way." The King's agitation at being urged to grant power to the Romanists, was not unlikely to expose him to such an attack. "At the Levee, on Wednesday, the 28th of January, the King said to Dundas: 'What is this that this young Lord has brought over, which they are going to throw at my head?' . . . Lord C. came over with the plan in September. . . . 'I shall reckon any man my personal enemy who proposes any such measure. The most Jacobinical thing I ever heard of.' 'You'll find,' said Dundas, 'among those who are friendly to that measure, some you never supposed your enemies.'"

"Saturday, March 7th. To Speaker's Levee—changed to Saturday night. Shows the good of all such attempts—carried only half-way at first. Much talk there, and home late. The King gradually getting better—very calm and resigned, on religious grounds."

"Saw Lord Eldon, and long talk with him on the best mode of study and discipline—for the young Grants—to be lawyers." The Chancellor's reply was not encouraging—"I know no rule to give them, but that they must make up their minds to live like a hermit, and work like a horse." "Eldon had just received the great seal, and I expressed my fears that they were bringing the King into public too soon after his late



indisposition. 'You shall judge for yourself,' he answered, 'from what passed between us when I kissed hands on my appointment. The King had been conversing with me, and when I was about to retire, he said: "Give my remembrances to Lady Eldon." I acknowledged his condescension, and intimated that I was ignorant of Lady Eldon's claim to such a notice. "Yes, yes," he answered: "I know how much I owe to Lady Eldon; I know that you would have made yourself a country curate, and that she has made you my Lord Chancellor."' '

"About ten days ago," he writes to Mr. Bankes, in September, "I brought Mrs. Wilberforce and my three children to these my old bachelor quarters, in Needwood forest; Gisborne my host. This you may remember is the forest which we devoted to the axe and the ploughshare a few months ago. I confess I have been not a little provoked to see such extents of miserable hopeless wastes suffered to continue in their present state of unprofitable nakedness, whilst these beautiful retreats are sacrificed. However, if wheat be pulled down one shilling a quarter, it will be a reimbursement."

A long letter to Mr. Pitt, was written at this time, urging on him some measure for the relief of the poor, from the public purse. While at Mr. Gisborne's, he was delighted by the news that the preliminaries of peace had been signed, soon after which we find him making his usual visit to Bath, from which place he wrote:

"MY DEAR GISBORNE: \* \* \* \* \* This is a sad place for visitors; and as I can not think it right to say, through my servant, 'not at home,'\* and am not al-

\* He was brought to this conviction by the bluntness of a faithful north-country servant, to whom he had carefully, and as he believed,

lowed to tell people so myself, I may be interrupted before I have done writing the letter I have promised you. Before I enter on my task, let me only assure you, as the best thanks I can offer for your hospitality, that I do not know when we have spent our time so happily, as under your roof. I could enlarge, but time must be economized. Let us in such a world as this, maintain between our families a close alliance, that by mutual aid and countenance, we and they may the better, through God's help, stem the torrent in some degree, or at least (a rap at the door) stand our own ground. Kindest remembrances. God bless you.

"Ever affectionately yours,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

"My days," he complains, "at this place roll rapidly away, and in a most unprofitable and laborious succession of frivolities. Yet I know not how this could be avoided. I am returning soon to the bustle of London and political life. May God protect me by His grace, and enable me to stand the fiery trial. I shall, if I honestly wait on Him." On the 27th, he left Bath, "with a heart heavy from the prospect of returning soon to Parliament; from the fear of the war's going on; from the bustle, turmoil, and contention of my parliamentary life."

successfully, explained the true meaning of this conventional refusal. A tedious visitor had been suffered to intrude upon his busiest hours, and when he asked, "Why did you show him in? why did you not say that I was not at home?" the answer he received convinced him that he could not lawfully employ this convenient phrase. "So I did, sir," was the reply, "but he looked so hard at me, as much as to say, I know that you are telling a lie, that I was ashamed to stand to it, so I e'en let him in."

"It is a rare and most instructive sight," say his sons, "which his private journals of this date exhibit. There have been many whom the love of ease has shielded from every temptation of ambition; and not a few in whom waywardness of temper has nourished a fierce and untractable independence; but it has seldom happened that one who was possessed of every quality of mind and fortune which could most encourage and reward ambition, has been seen to put away soberly and quietly its utmost offers. This he now did. Those who saw only the result, would never have suspected that his easy course was the result of any struggle—yet so it was: his freedom from ambition was no natural immunity, but a victory of Christian principle. 'I have of late,' he says, 'perceived on looking inwards, the workings of ambition, of love of this world, its honors, riches, estimation, and even of worldly desires for my family, of which before I do not recollect that I was conscious. The settled judgment of my mind I would humbly hope is right. I trust that I am comparatively indifferent in my cool estimate of things to the goods of this life: but alas! I become soiled and worldly-minded.' 'That our feelings do not correspond with our judgments, is one of the strongest proofs of our depravity and of the double man within us. I believe that retired, domestic life, is by far the most happy for me, blessed as I am with affluence, etc. Yet when I see those who were my equals or inferiors, rising above me into stations of wealth, rank, etc., I find myself tempted to desire their stations, which yet I *know* would not increase my happiness, or even be more truly honorable. I speak not of the desire of an increased power of usefulness. That is another and a right feel-

ing. Mine, against which, however, in its risings I struggle, and which I strive to suppress, is a sadly depraved appetite, rooted in an inordinate love of this world. Oh! may the compunction I now feel, be the blessed operation of the Holy Spirit.

“I suspect I have been allotting habitually too little time to religious exercises, as private devotion, religious meditation, Scripture reading, etc. Hence I am lean, and cold, and hard. God, perhaps, would prosper me more in spiritual things, if I were to be more diligent in using the means of grace. And though in the main I have thought myself pursuing the course chalked out for me by Providence, and with a diligence prompted and enjoined by the injunctions of Scripture, yet I suspect that I had better allot more time, say two hours, or an hour and a half, to religious exercises daily, (besides Sundays,) and try whether by so doing I can not preserve a frame of spirit more habitually devotional, a more lively sense of unseen things, a warmer love of God, and a greater degree of hunger and thirst after righteousness, a heart less prone to be soiled with worldly cares, designs, passions, and apprehensions, and a real, undissembled longing for heaven, its pleasures, and its purity.

“I know that all external means are nothing without the quickening Spirit; but the Scripture enjoins constant prayer, and the writings and example of all good men suggest and enforce the necessity of a considerable proportion of meditation, and other religious exercises, for maintaining the spiritual life vigorous and flourishing. Let me therefore make the effort in humble reliance on divine grace. God, if He will, can turn the hearts of men, and give me favorable opportuni-

ties, and enable me to use them, and more than compensate for all the hours taken from study, business, or civility, and devoted to Him. O God! give me a single heart, and a single eye, fixed on Thy favors, and resolutely determined to live to Thy glory, careless whether I succeed or not in worldly concerns, leaving all my human interests and objects to Thee, beseeching Thee to enable me to set my affections on things above; and walking by faith, to wait on Christ, and live on Him day by day here, till at length, through His infinite and wholly unmerited mercy, I am taken to dwell with Him hereafter in everlasting happiness and glory.'"

He had confined himself, in the preceding session, to a declaration of his unaltered feelings on the subject of the abolition of the slave trade without bringing on his usual motion. The prospect of peace had suggested to him a "grand abolition plan," and he was "trying at a general convention." This scheme would have been impeded by a fresh defeat, upon which he could not but calculate in the existing House of Commons. He thought it better, therefore, for his cause, to let the session pass in silence, and exert his chief strength in private with the Government.

Under these circumstances, he was "busy writing Addington (Prime Minister) a long letter on negotiation for general abolition," begging him to allot to it a quiet half-hour, as soon as he was able.

He enters in his diary: "If Mr. Pitt had been minister when this peace was negotiated, the question would have come into discussion;" but Lord Hawkesbury and Mr. Addington could not be persuaded. "At last I wrote to both of them very serious letters, telling them I so did to leave it with them solemnly."

His diary proves him to have been much occupied with various schemes of benevolence, both in Parliament and in private life. "The Slave Trade," "Society for bettering Condition of the Poor," "Proclamation Society," "Sierra Leone," "Condition of Children in Cotton Mills," "Sunday Bill," "Oath Bill," are all frequently noticed as drawing his attention both in the House and in his conversation with his friends.

The adverse temper of the existing House of Commons on the subject of abolition, had been shown too plainly to be doubted. Mr. Addington had coldly and reluctantly engaged to pause before he opened St. Vincent's and Trinidad for the reception of another million of Africans; whilst the fierce conflicts of St. Domingo, and the insurrections of Dominica and Tobago, had brought general reproach upon the negro name. To all this was added the miserable state of Sierre Leone, which having struggled through external difficulties, was now threatened with destruction by the rebellious spirit of the Nova Scotia negroes. Yet upon the whole he resolved to bring his motion forward, and introduced it upon the 3d of June, though "not able to get it on till too late, when the House was almost empty." But a dissolution was too near to allow him to bring his motion to any practical conclusion, and upon the 14th, he felt "compelled to give it up for this year."

Parliament was prorogued upon the 28th of June, and dissolved upon the 29th. Upon the 30th, he was "off before nine for Broomfield," on his journey to the north. The "Beverly, Hull, and York elections," were already "raging;" but no opposition was talked of for the county. Early in the spring there had been some rumors of a contest, but they had now vanished.

He had, of necessity, been more than ever absent from the county since his last election; and this had given rise to a report, that he intended to retire from its representation. "I have been strongly urged," he told Mr. Hey, "to advertise my intention of offering my services in the ensuing general election. But I pause. Nor do I think it probable, unless something happens in the interval, that the peace of the county will be disturbed. I fear my pride would be wounded, were I to be turned out; but after the risings of this bad passion should have been conquered, I own I should rejoice in my liberty. However, I would leave my continuance in public life to Providence, and not retire till its signal be given for my release.

"I can scarcely enough impress you with a sense of the degree in which I shrink from the very idea of a parliamentary struggle. Whether it be the effect of of my being so much older, or from some other cause, I quite abhor the prospect of a general election; and to be active in preserving my situation, seems like laboring to be permitted to tug at the oar like a galley slave with fetters on my legs and the lash at my back. I pant for quiet and retirement, and what is more, I entertain serious doubt whether I should not act wisely in retiring from my public station, whether I should not be able to promote the glory of God and the good of my fellow-creatures more in private. My pen might then be employed regularly and assiduously. But I am deterred from yielding to the impulse I feel thus to secede, by the fear of carving for myself."

He reached the West Riding upon the first of July, and after a hasty canvass, was at York upon the "election day. July 12th. Got up earlyish to think of speech.

To tavern by ten, and mounted at half-past ten. I pleased people in speaking, and did well. Crowded hall, and castle yard immensely so." "It was, indeed," says a bystander, "an august and interesting scene; not one hand was lifted up against him, and the surrounding countenances were expressive of the greatest delight and esteem towards him."



## CHAPTER XIX.

IMMEDIATELY on his election he returned to the labors of that honorable post which he had occupied for eighteen years. "The event," writes his cousin, Lord Carlington, (in a letter, docketed, "kind condolence on my reelection,") "which has given your other friends so much pleasure, has filled me with sentiments of an opposite nature. No constitution can stand during the ordinary period of active life, such exertions as yours have been in the service of the county of York. It would have been better if, like Windham, but without his struggle and defeat, you had taken refuge in a close borough, the means of which I should have been proud to have afforded you."

A period of unusual leisure seemed now before him, and he entered on it with a degree of deep and serious reflection, for which few find opportunity in the middle of a busy life. He took a calm and thoughtful estimate of his situation and his faculties, inquiring where they were most capable of employment and improvement. The result of these reflections in "the reed house," (a favorite arbor in his garden,) he "put down on paper, that they might not be the fugitive thoughts of the moment, but the deliberate conclusions of his judgment recorded for his own use; or possibly, that my dear wife, for the benefit of my children, may know the con-

siderations by which I am guided in the direction of my labors and the employment of my time.

“ When I look into my own mind, I find it a perfect chaos, wherein the little knowledge which I do possess, is but confusedly and darkly visible ; and where, from the want of classification and recapitulation, and from having satisfied myself with a superficial acquaintance with things, and having propositions brought into and left in my mind, without settling the result, discriminating the true from the false, the certain from the uncertain—I am in truth, shamefully ignorant of many subjects which I seem to know, and should be thoroughly acquainted with. What has brought me into this state, is a treacherous memory, and my having from nature a quick perception and lively imagination, with an understanding (either naturally or from bad habits) defective in the power of steadily contemplating many objects without confusion. This is really weakness of intellect, but it might have been lessened by early and habitual efforts. The mathematics and algebra would here have been eminently useful to me ; method, too, might have been highly beneficial in keeping me from a habit of half-attention. Alas ! these remedies were neglected, and from 17 to 21, when I ought to have been under that strict and wholesome regimen which the peculiar diseases of my intellectual powers seemed to require, I was strengthening these natural maladies : and this till æt. 28. And though since that time I have been endeavoring to employ my talents, in the largest sense, to the glory of God, and the good of man, yet, alas ! how ineffectually ! and my peculiar situation, and the great variety of things and persons with which it renders me conversant, has kept me sadly back.

"I am tempted to think that it is now too late to mend my plan practically, with any effect; yet as it has pleased God to call me again to Parliament, and as the greater my natural infirmities the more every aid is wanted, I am resolved to enter on a course of more systematic retention of the little I know or can acquire, and I mean to note down roughly the scheme of study it will be best for me to pursue. I would not overrate knowledge, or proficiency in any human pursuits or acquirements; but inasmuch as God works by human means, it seems to be our duty to labor diligently in the pursuit of those qualifications, which appear to be the instruments of usefulness for our particular station and occupation in life. Eloquence in its right sense is of great effect in every free community; and as it has pleased God to endow me with a certain natural turn for public speaking, and by His providence to place me in a situation in which there is room for the use of that talent, it seems to be my duty to improve that natural faculty, and cultivate that true eloquence which alone is suitable to the character of a follower of the Saviour, who was full of love, truth, and lowliness. Besides, the very basis of eloquence, in the sense in which I use it, is wisdom and knowledge, a thorough acquaintance with one's subject, the sure possession of it, and power of promptly calling up and using it. But let me ever remember here what cause there is for continual watchfulness and godly jealousy, lest the pursuit should lead to an inordinate love of worldly estimation, to vanity and pride; and if to them, in its consequence to the malignant passions."

The recurrence of his birth-day (æ. 43) led him again a few days later, to review his situation and employment. He had of late found more time than usual for

general reading. To this he was so much devoted, that he found it, he has often said, likely to encroach more than any press of business upon the hours allotted to devotion. "I find books," he says, "alienate my heart from God as much as any thing. I have been framing a plan of study for myself, but let me remember that one thing is needful, that if my heart can not be kept in a spiritual state without so much prayer, meditation, Scripture-reading, etc., as are incompatible with study and business, I must *seek first* the righteousness of God. Yet, O Lord! when I think how little I have done, I am ashamed and confounded, and I would fain honor God more than I have yet done."

Again he says: "Is it that my devotions are too much hurried, that I do not read Scripture enough, or how is it, that I leave with reluctance the mere chit-chat of Boswell's Johnson, for what ought to be the grateful offices of prayer and praise? Yet if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His. I must then grow in grace. I must love God more. I must feel the power of divine things more. Whether I am more or less learned, signifies not. Whether even I execute the work which I deem useful, is comparatively unimportant. But beware, O my soul! of lukewarmness. I feel it difficult to adjust the due degree of time to be allotted to prayer, Scripture reading, and other religious exercises. God loves mercy better than sacrifice, and there is a danger of a superstitious spirit, of being led to depend on the forms of religion. Yet the experience and example of good men seems a fair guide. At all events, however, some way or other, my affections must be set on things above. God is willing to supply our needs. They who wait on Him shall renew their strength. I humbly trust in His promises."

"I have lately been led to think of that part of my life wherein I lived without God in the world, wasting, and even abusing all the faculties He had given me for His glory. Surely when I think of the way in which I went on for many years, from about sixteen to 1785-6, I can only fall down with astonishment as well as humiliation, before the throne of grace, and adore with wonder, no less than remorse and gratitude, that infinite mercy of God which did not cast me off, but on the contrary, guiding me by a way which I knew not, led me to those from whom I was to receive the knowledge of salvation, (not more manifestly His work was St. Paul's instruction by Ananias,) and above all softened my hard heart, fixed my inconstant temper, and though with sad occasional relapses, and above all, shameful unprofitableness, has enabled me to continue until this day. Praise the Lord, O my soul!"

The autumn was spent in the neighborhood of London, where he says: "I have found myself incessantly worried by company, so that I am meditating to retire to some other place for quiet. I know too well, '*coelum non animam mutant*,' yet much company is the bane of grace in the soul;" and he regrets that he allows "the minor poets" to wear away time which he withheld from the best worldly society. Yet he was thus brought into direct contact with many persons from whom he derived information which was valuable, and on whom he exerted in turn an important influence, even when it was only negative; and the transient notices of current events, with which his diary is filled, afford glimpses at the times, fraught as they were with thrilling incidents, which are highly interesting.

"Venn called; kept him to dinner. Most interesting conversation; telling us many most affecting inci-

dents about his father, displaying especially his zeal and success in God's cause, his powers of conciliating people who were prejudiced against him. Mr. Kershaw and another going over from Halifax to laugh, Kershaw completely conquered, and to his dying day devoted to Mr. Venn. Mr. Venn's trust in Providence, and one singular interference: when all gloomy for want of means to pay the butcher, a £50 note came; from whom he never found out. At Tadcaster, the minister really proposed to him to drink a glass of brandy, and when he refused, said he would do the duty himself."

"Public events. Our government seems to have been remonstrating against Bonaparte's scandalous invasion of Swiss freedom, but the issue not yet clear. I think Bonaparte will give way in some degree, without owning it. Pitt still kindly helping Addington. Came to London and visited him at Richmond Park, just after Holwood sold. Pitt called and spent a day and a quarter at Sir Charles Middleton's, going there to study farming. Sir Charles astonished at his wonderful sagacity, and power of combining and reasoning out. Says he is the best gentleman farmer he, Sir Charles, knows, and may be the best farmer in England. Bernard and I busy together about education plan for children of lower orders."

At the very commencement of the session, he declared his views upon foreign policy. "Nov. 24th. Address moved. Opened debate. Spoke strongly against engaging in continental alliances as principals." And again, "Spoke, having been much urged by Canning and Ryder, on continental alliances." "Our national integrity and good faith renders us unfit to enter on them. We can not keep or break engagements as it suits the convenience of the moment." He went on to

urge upon the government a due employment of the present time of peace.

The part he took in these debates attracted much attention both in and out of Parliament. "We hear a great deal of a famous speech of yours and Sheridan's," writes Mrs. Hannah More, "so much that we regret that our economy had cut off the expense of a London paper." "You talk of my speech," he answers; "whatever it was, the newspapers would have given you no idea of it. Never was any one made to talk such arrant nonsense, and on a subject too on which I wished not to have been misstated."

Yet deeply as his attention was devoted to public events, he did not allow even their importance to withdraw it from other affairs of still higher import. Thus we find him writing a paper for the *Christian Observer*, and to Hannah More he writes :

"BROOMFIELD, Sept. 7th, 1802.

"MY DEAR FRIEND : It has, you know, been matter of controversy what degrees or kind of resemblance in the thoughts of different writers are proofs that the one has borrowed from the other. You may perhaps at first suspect some laying of heads together, when you read what I am about to propose to you, that you should lend your aid a little to the cause of the *Christian Observer*. I called on Henry Thornton last night to state to him this my opinion, when I found that he had already written to you on the same subject. But as where there is no servile imitation, as the critics hold, there will be diversities, so here I find Henry Thornton and I, agreeing in the main idea, had differed in the next link of the chain. He wished you, I find, to send us an account of Miss Harriet Bird's last hours.

Nothing on that subject can at all equal the simple expression of your feelings on the spot. Never shall I forget the impression it produced on my own heart when I first read it, on a Sunday, the day after its arrival, at Mr. Grant's house in John street. We, some of us, have that very paper, which, with a little explanation and supplement, would be the best mode of sending it forth. But *my* idea was and is, that you should write some religious and moral novels, stories, tales, call 'em what you will, illustrative of character and principles. The Cheap Repository tales, a little raised in their subjects, are the very things I want ; and I am persuaded, if you would thus give your aid, and I join mine, (which I will, if you will agree to furnish your complement,) we might at once greatly raise the character, and increase the utility of the work. The truth is, it is heavy, and will be heavy, from the very nature of the case. If it be not enlivened it will sink, and you will hereafter regret that you refused to lend a helping hand, to keep it above water. Do therefore think of what I say, and fall to work notwithstanding your ill-health. You have no valid excuse for not taking up the pen, because you write with such facility. I who, without any false humility, must say the very opposite of myself, will yet fall to work when I know you have agreed to contribute. You must not refuse me. I have just looked at the last number of the *Anti-Jacobin*. They are sinking fast, and already have such marks of death about them, that the Humane Society itself could scarce undertake to recover them."

The year concludes with some striking secret meditations. "How many and great corruptions does the House of Commons discover to me in myself! What



love of worldly estimation, vanity, earthly-mindedness ! How different should be the frame of a real Christian, who, poor in spirit, and feeling himself a stranger and a pilgrim on earth, is looking for the coming of his Lord and Saviour ; who longs to be delivered from the present evil world, and to see God as He is ! I know that this world is passing away, and that the favor of God, and a share in the blessings of the Redeemer's purchase, are alone worthy of the pursuit of a rational being ; but alas ! alas ! I scarcely dare say I love God and His ways. If I have made any progress, it is in the clearer discovery of my own exceeding sinfulness and weakness. Yet I am convinced it is my own fault. Let me not acquiesce then in my sinful state, as if it were not to be escaped from. Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ. Yes, we may, I may, become holy. Press forward, then, O my soul ! Strive more vigorously. God and Christ will not refuse their help. And may the emotions I have been now experiencing, be the gracious motions of the divine Spirit, quickening my dead heart, and bringing me from the power of Satan unto God,"

The new year began with his receiving the Holy Communion, and forming vows of more devoted service. "I will press forward and labor to know God better, and love Him more—assuredly I may, because God will give His Holy Spirit to them that ask Him, and the Holy Ghost will shed abroad the love of God in the heart. Oh ! then pray—pray—be earnest—press forward and follow on to know the Lord. Without watchfulness, humiliation, and prayer, the sense of Divine things must languish, as much as the grass withers for want of refreshing rains and dews. The word of God and the lives of good men give us reason to be-

lieve that without these there can be no lively exercise of Christian graces. Trifle not then, O my soul! with thy immortal interests. Heaven is not to be won without labor. Oh! then press forward; whatever else is neglected, let this one thing needful be attended to: then will God bless thee. I will try to retire at nine or half-past, and every evening give half an hour, or an hour, to secret exercises, endeavoring to raise my mind more, and that it may be more warmed with heavenly fire. Help me, O Lord!—without Thee I can do nothing. Let me strive to maintain a uniform frame of gratitude, veneration, love, and humility, not unelevated with holy confidence, and trembling hope in the mercies of that God, whose ways are not as our ways, nor His thoughts as our thoughts. I should almost despair of myself, but for His promises. Strive, O my soul! to maintain and keep alive impressions; first, of the constant presence of a holy, omniscient, omnipotent, but infinitely merciful and gracious God, of Christ our Almighty Shepherd, of the Holy Spirit, of the evil one, and the invisible world in general; secondly, of the real nature and malignity of sin, as a holy curb on my inclinations, which will check me and keep me from evil; thirdly, of my own vileness and unprofitableness. And to these let me add a fourth, a sense of the multiplied blessings of my situation. Surely never cup was so full. Oh! that I were more thankful. My ingratitude should humble me in the dust." He was spending this vacation at Broomfield, though often called to London by the claims of charity and business.

The following characteristic entry in his diary occurs at this time: "Wrote a long letter to poor Finley," and "Had a long interview with poor Finley in Newgate—very affecting—shocked at Newgate and its inhabit-

ants." He had once been in the habit of making frequent visits to the prisons, but the constant pressure of other engagements had interrupted this mode of effort to do good, and this case had been brought before his notice by others. It was one of great affliction. Finley was an officer in the army, the son of a clergyman whose venerable widow still survived. "He had been patronized," Mr. Willberforce writes to Mr. Babington, "by the Marquis of Buckingham, Windham, and others; and being dissipated and profuse beyond his means, is now under sentence of death for forgery, and sure to suffer. I heard of him through his wife, a poor Scotch girl, young and handsome, whom he had brought out of the north, and who has not a friend or an acquaintance in London, while, poor soul, she has a sucking child at the breast. I heard some things of the man which made me entertain an indifferent opinion of him, and was averse to sending any clergyman to him; but my dear wife prevailed on me to do it, and I put 'Doddridge's Rise and Progress' into his hands, and Crowther\* undertook to visit him. To be short, we trust it has pleased God to bless the means which we have used, and that the poor man is a true convert. Providentially, he has had far more time than usual for preparation, and, as he remarked himself when I was with him the other day, he has enjoyed much more space and leisure for religious consideration than if he had been lying on a sick-bed. His venerable mother, a most pleasing old woman above four-score, told me with tears, that she was indebted to me beyond what language could express for having been the instrument of her son's happy change."

\* Rev. Samuel Crowther, Vicar of Christ's Church, Newgate.

Finley was executed upon the 8th of February. "My note written to Crowther with a message to him, consoled and cheered him. Crowther came to dine. Delighted with his account of Finley's latter days—his deep humility and his soundness." What he witnessed in this instance strengthened his disapprobation of the usual haste with which execution is made to follow sentence. He had once intended to bring the matter before Parliament, and gave it up only from the fear of inflicting a useless injury upon religion, by provoking an unsuitable discussion. "To bring forward," was his answer, when it was pressed upon him, "such a motion would lead to much profane ribaldry, and no good result. You could only argue it on grounds to which the great mass of members are altogether strangers." No man with a bold maintenance of truth united a nicer sense of the reverence due to holy things; and he would not needlessly expose the sanctuary to the hard gaze of coarse and careless spirits. He had studied carefully his audience, and would reprove the low tone of doctrine which he sometimes heard from the pulpit by remarking: "I could say as much as that in the House of Commons."

The following letter, written at this time to a Captain in the Royal Navy, may be adduced as an illustration of the wisdom and delicacy, mingled with decision, which was the characteristic mark of his efforts for the welfare of his friends. \* \* \* \* \* "Your life on ship-board abounds with difficulties and temptations; yet I have often thought, that when a man rises in the Navy to your rank, or rather so high as to have a cabin to himself, it must be a situation far less unfavorable in a religious view than many others. He may enjoy a good deal of retirement. When he chooses, he may lock his

door and commune with his own heart in his chamber, and be still. Of all the means of improvement, I take prayer to be by far the most effectual, especially when it is accompanied by reading the Scriptures and praying over them. God has promised in His word that He will give His Holy Spirit to them who ask Him ; that He will give them wisdom ; that He will guide them in the way wherein they should go ; and when, relying on His fidelity, we fall on our knees before Him, and pour out our hearts in prayer, claiming His precious promises made to us through Christ Jesus, we are assured that He is more ready to hear us than we are to pray to Him. I am aware of the danger to which you must be exposed from vicious companions ; but you must be aware of this. You will, of course, pray to be protected against it, and to be preserved safe from the contagion of sin. I am sure you will not require an apology for a mark of real friendship which I am going to show you, by mentioning that when you were last with me I with pain observed you take the name of God in vain. It may be difficult not to be tainted with this practice, so prevalent, I fear, both in the navy and the army ; yet I remember Sir C. Middleton told me that he was able to repress the horrid practice of swearing on board the ship he commanded. I should have told you this at the time, but for my not having a favorable opportunity. O my dear sir ! how shall we in the next world feel obliged to those who in this have promoted our spiritual well-being, though perhaps at the time we were not fully sensible of the value of the service which was rendered us ! Good offices of this kind will last forever ; and I can conceive that in that future blessed world, in which, I doubt not, friends will meet and know each other, and dwell in the enjoyment

of the highest and purest happiness from social intercourse, many will often talk to each other of the obligations they owe to those who, while on earth, were instrumental in helping them forward to heaven : and that mutually to acknowledge these under circumstances which will make them feel and know the degree of service which has been rendered, will often call forth the affections, and warm the hearts of the purified spirits in glory. It should be our endeavor while we continue in this world to become more and more qualified to take our place in that blessed society. This is to be effected by our obtaining more and more of the sanctifying influences of God's Holy Spirit ; and the Holy Spirit is to be obtained by earnest, frequent, and persevering prayer, made in the name and for the sake of our blessed Saviour and Intercessor ; and by taking care not to grieve the Holy Spirit, and tempt Him to withdraw from us, by living in the practice of any known sin, or the neglect of any known duty. Many would call this a sermon rather than a letter ; but in writing to you I pour forth my thoughts as they flow in their natural course, and I am persuaded you would not have me to check them. Before I conclude let me ask if I can send any books which will be acceptable to you for your own perusal ; and also whether it might do good among the sailors to send you a parcel of religious tracts, mixing the entertaining with the serious, (like our excellent friend, Hannah More,) to be distributed among them ; or whether you want Bibles or Testaments. When you answer this, say also how they could be conveyed to you safely."

On the third of February Parliament reassembled, and he returned to active duty.

He was just about to bring on the Abolition question,

when he was seized, he tells Mr. Babington, who was then resident in Madeira, "with a certain illness which is going through all London, called, from its generality, the influenza. I conceive it is this complaint under which I have labored, for I am only now recovering, I thank God, after a more serious illness than I have had for many years. But this, as well as every other dispensation, has furnished abundant matter for thankfulness. I suffered no pain worth speaking of; I had every possible comfort; my mind was in a very tranquil, comfortable state, and the Dean of Carlisle *happened*, as we speak, to be upon the point of coming up, and was an unspeakable comfort to my wife."

Whilst he was still confined at home, "a message from the King announced the necessity of immediate military preparations." Silent leges inter arma: and for the remainder of the year threatenings of invasion and provision for defense engrossed the minds of all.

"Your heart would ache," he writes upon the 22d of March to Mr. Babington, "could I unload to you my budget and make you a partaker of my political grievances. The premier is a man of sense, of a generous mind, of pure and upright intentions, and of more religion than almost any other politician. But alas! he has sadly disappointed me; I trusted he would correct abuses, but in vain have I endeavored to spirit him up even when convinced of their reality. Just now, when I expected I should hear of the members of a particular Board, that they were about to be hanged, or (as I am writing to a sober, matter-of-fact man) more literally, that they were turned out with disgrace, I have heard that they are going to have £200 per annum each added to their salaries. In almost every department, but most in the different branches of the naval,

there has been sad mismanagement. Then my poor slaves! This King's message, which came down before I had returned to the House after my illness, (by which I was attacked almost immediately after my arrival in London,) has made it improper to bring forward my intended motion. And all this time the wicked abominations of the Slave Trade are going on in a greater degree than ever."

"Two days ago I wrote a serious letter to Addington (Prime Minister) on naval and other mismanagement, which kindly received and answered. Peace and war still undecided."

All eyes were then turned toward this great question. The hope of preserving peace was evidently declining day by day. "Let me tell you," he says to Mr. Babington, "while I think of it, that the accounts you will see in the newspapers of Bonaparte's violent language and demeanor towards Lord Whitworth, at Madame Bonaparte's drawing-room, are substantially true. He spoke loud enough to be heard by two hundred people, and his countenance was perfectly distorted by passion. I am grieved to tell you from the concurrent testimony of several well-informed persons who have been lately in France, that there exists pretty generally a rooted hatred of Great Britain. It is conceived that the war must have ended much sooner but for us. Envy, jealousy, vanity, all conspire to foment this spirit of hostility. How shocking this! My heart is heavy when I think of it. May you and I be enabled to live more and more above this world, and habitually to have our conversation, our citizenship in heaven."

"It was at this very time," say his sons, "amidst the din of warlike preparation, that the foundation-stone was laid of an institution which was to leaven all na-



tions with the principles of peace. The great difficulty of obtaining Bibles for home, and, still more, foreign circulation, had for some years been a matter of un-availing complaint. A new scheme to effect this purpose was now in agitation. The designers of the new Society proposed to combine for this common object the scattered energies of all professing Christians ; and so to create a mighty instrument for the circulation of the truth. Mr. Wilberforce had secretly done much in this very work ; and the catholic aspect worn by this new Society delighted his large and liberal mind. He was accordingly one of its first framers." "Hughes, Reyner, and Grant breakfasted with me," says his diary, "on Bible Society formation." And a few days later : "City—Bible Society proposal." "Here," as he would often mention, "a few of us met together at Mr. Hardcastle's counting-house, at a later hour than suited city habits, out of a regard to my convenience, and yet on so dark a morning that we discussed by candle-light, while we resolved upon the establishment of the Bible Society."

Thus feeble in its origin was the great Association which has since extended itself by means of the kindred organizations and filial institutions, until it has become the greatest institution of the Christian Church. The enlightened judgment and catholic affections of Mr. Wilberforce could see none of the injurious results to the Established Church which were apprehended by some, and which served as an apology to many for neglect of the duty to circulate freely the word of God. And though it received the support of few among the Bishops, and was opposed by many, he saw no danger to the Established Church from the coöperation of Dissenters in this great work, and therefore not only joined

them in its organization, but ever continued to favor it with his support and countenance. The exceedingly unsettled condition of public affairs was still, however, the chief subject of his anxieties, and occupied much of his time and thoughts. Averse as he was to war on principle, and suffering as he had done recently from sympathy with the starving poor, he saw the threatening cloud again gathering blackness abroad, while the ministry of Mr. Addington, notwithstanding the support it received from Mr. Pitt, was daily losing the confidence of the people at home. After a survey of the state of affairs, in a letter to Lord Muncaster, he says: "O my dear friend! I wish I were out of the bustle. How ardently do I pant for the shade! If I durst carve for myself, I would not continue a week longer in harness. But I am ashamed, overflowing as my cup is with blessings, to say any thing which implies dissatisfaction with my condition. Never had man more cause for thankfulness, and I ought to be more actively grateful than I am."

Three days later, he notices in his diary having been taken into the councils which resulted in the return of Mr. Pitt to the direction of affairs. "What a worldly spirit did this conversation create in me, from the consciousness of being the depositary of secrets! Yet my better judgment resists these emotions, and suggests to me that these things are low, compared with a Christian's objects. I find reason to thank God for my marriage, which by shutting me out more from the world, has tended to keep me from its infection. Oh! may my conversation be in heaven!" \* \* \* \* "I fear my frame of mind is not what it ought to be; for though my spirits are often low in the society of these friends, yet I do not feel enough a lively and tender

concern for their spiritual state. O Lord ! make me more transformed into Thine image !” The Saturday evening reflection leads him to speak of the necessity for “ combating dullness by prayer and meditation, in order to fit myself for to-morrow, especially as I have had so little time for religious offices this week. I have found evil from not trying to improve Saturday evenings, and to be earlier on Sunday mornings for God. I must endeavor D. G. to mend here.” And as the result of these prayers and efforts, he says on Sunday : “ Oh ! blessed day, which allows us a precious interval wherein to pause, to come out of the thickets of worldly concerns, and to give ourselves up to heavenly and spiritual objects. And oh ! what language can do justice to the emotions of gratitude which ought to fill my heart, when I consider how few of my fellows know and feel its value and proper use. Oh ! the infinite goodness and mercy of my God and Saviour !”

Every eye was now fixed upon the dangers of the country. An army of 500,000 veterans, flushed with victory, and embittered by former disappointments, lay just across the Channel, ready to invade its shores. He was giving a “ dinner to King, the American minister, on his taking leave, when Henry Thornton came over with the sad tidings of Addington’s having declared in his place, that Andreossi had asked for a passport, that Lord Whitworth returning, in short, that war. The news had the effect on the sudden, of making me feel a sort of intoxicating flush, though my judgment so deeply deplores it. 7th. Morning, on opening the Bible, after praying to God for guidance and protection, I accidentally just glanced my eye on Jeremiah 39 : 16-18. Oh ! that I may have God for a refuge, and then it matters not what befalls me. I would not lay much stress on

such incidents, because we are not warranted so to do by the word of God, but it seems fit to be noticed and recorded."

His journal during this year is more than usually full of the secret workings of his mind. "What a mystery of iniquity," he says, "is the human heart! How forcibly do thoughts of worldly pursuits intrude into the mind during the devotional exercises, and how obstinately do they maintain their place, and when excluded, how incessantly do they renew their attacks!—which yet the moment our devotional exercises are over, fly away of themselves. To-day the slave trade thus harassed me." And on a following Sunday—"I have been at prayer, and I hope with some fervency of desire for the blessings for which I prayed; but alas! my worldly mind! Surely it is the temptation of the evil spirit. Having called for the first time at Grant's, on the way from church, and having talked quite at random of my probably taking a house near him with a back-door to Museum Gardens, my mind keeps running on it; it absolutely haunts me, and will recur, do all I can. Oh! may Christ by His Spirit give me that self-possession and sobriety of mind, that low estimate of temporal things, that strong impression of their uncertainty and transitoriness, that I may not be thus at the mercy, the mere sport of my imagination. In these times especially (yesterday the news of Lord Whitworth's leaving Paris, and consequent expectation of war) I should be weaned from this world, and be as one who is here a stranger and a pilgrim."

The next day he "read the papers concerning the rupture with France, on his way to Broomfield;" and found himself reluctantly compelled on the following Monday, to oppose the Government. "Lord Teign-

mouth came after breakfast to talk politics. He and I had taken exactly the same view of the state of affairs; thinking our Government had improperly asked to retain Malta, and that they ought to have offered to acquiesce in any arrangement for making it independent. Read the papers, and talked, and considered. House till half-past twelve. Spoke late, and House very impatient, being against their opinions." "Malta," he said, "is indeed a valuable possession, but the most valuable of all the possessions of this country, is its good faith. It is a possession which, above all others, we should watch with jealous circumspection, and guard from the very suspicion of infringement. This, then, is my grand objection to the conduct of ministers, that by claiming the possession of Malta, instead of its independence, they took ground which was barely tenable; they gave our inveterate enemy an opportunity of misstating our real views both to France and to Europe." The debate was renewed the following day. "House till four in the morning. Divided in minority of 67 against 398. Henry Thornton, Bankes, and I, agreed. Fox spoke three hours with wonderful ability, as Pitt last night, in quite different style, for an hour or more, appealing to national pride, honor, etc."

To this appeal he had himself replied in the conclusion of his speech. "I have not descanted on the evils of war, and endeavored to affect your passions by turning your minds to the contemplation of its various horrors; not but that I think a very unjust outcry is raised against all those who touch on those topics, whilst appeals to pride, to glory, to the reputation of our brave forefathers, are heard with delight, and clamorously applauded. It might tend, sir, to the discovery of the path of truth and wisdom, if appeals to the passions

were in all cases to be excluded from our discussions, and if we were to confine ourselves to a dry, cold, strict, logical investigation and analysis. But if we allow of appeals to those passions, the influence of which on persons in our rank of life, must be particularly strong, surely we should not so squeamishly reject every appeal to those feelings of our nature, which teach us to sympathize with the widow and the orphan, and to deplore the various sufferings of which war is, above all other calamities, the sure and prolific source." He felt deeply upon this subject, and published his speech.

The excitement of these stirring times caused no relaxation of that careful scrutiny with which he tried his temper and his conduct. "I have not been considerate," he says, "or kind enough towards Addington. Poor fellow! what annoyances has he! He has no peace as I have, alas!" And again: "July 17th. I fear I did not act honestly in persuading myself that I might neglect the House of Commons yesterday for Lord St. Helen's, whom I had asked to dinner. It is dangerous to act contrary to conscience, in little things as well as great. It is tempting God to withdraw His Holy Spirit. That way of persuading ourselves, which we are apt to practise, when inclined to a thing which the first simple suggestion of conscience opposes, is to be carefully watched against. Yet we seem not to be deceived either, but to see as it were out of the corner of our eye the right all the while."

It was no light excuse which ever led him to absent himself from Parliament. Three days after this last entry, he says: "To town, meaning Levee, but so poorly that I gave it up. House. Defense Bill till late. Alas! Sunday drilling introduced contrary to Yorke's declaration, from his being put out of sorts

about another clause. I spoke. Pitt answered me." He never ceased to oppose this injurious practice until he succeeded in preventing it. "I strongly opposed this war," he wrote many years afterwards, "differing from those with whom I commonly agreed, at a great cost of private feeling; but when once it had begun, I did not persist in declaiming against its impolicy and mischiefs, because I knew that by so doing I should only injure my country."

No one saw with more regret the strange inertness of the Government. His long and tried friendship for Mr. Addington, made it the more painful to him, and he did all he could by personal remonstrance, to stir him up to greater energy of conduct. He exerted himself to kindle a proper ardor in the country; and for this purpose he determined upon travelling into Yorkshire, to be present at a public meeting for voting an address. Upon the 26th of July, he set out from London, and leaving his family at Wood Hall, in Hertfordshire, he pushed on to York, which he reached upon the 28th. "Found the meeting begun. I had better have been there the night before—many gentlemen—castle yard. I spoke, and pretty well, but I did not feel myself warmed."

To the expenses of the volunteer force he subscribed £500; and finding that he "could do no more good by remaining" in the north, he set out upon the following day, and on the 30th rejoined his family in Hertfordshire. Here he staid some time; going to London on important questions, and rejoicing at every interval of leisure to shake off its dust and turmoil, and wander at will in the beautiful retirement of Wood Hall. Here he describes himself as "reading Hume, considering topics, running over many books. Much time consumed

about letters—a great accumulation of these, and necessity of writing to stir up and do good in various ways; and,” not the least characteristic, “visiting daily the sick-room of one of Mr. Smith’s footmen, to read and pray with him.” Aug. 5th. “A charming day. Walked about an hour with Cowper’s Poems—delightful—park—deer—water—wood. Delightful walk in the evening—a most romantic scene for a gentleman’s park. They have family prayers night and morning. What a lesson to try to do good by speaking to others! I remember when at Wilford, many years ago, I mentioned to my cousin about family prayers, and he adopted the custom the very next night.”

His letters, and the entries in his journal at this time, are filled with the expression of his anxiety on account of the inertness of the Government in its preparations to resist an invasion which he deemed imminent. To W. Hey, he wrote: “By repressing the voluntary spirit, Government has incurred a fearful responsibility. I can not but believe we might have been so manifestly strong, that Bonaparte would have despaired of making any impression on us, and would have given us a real victory without the risk of a defeat, and the bloodshed and expense of a contest.” He himself had a strong disposition to visit the county of York for the purpose of giving the countenance of his presence to the voluntary training for defense, but was deterred by the apprehension that the prudence which his feeble health might dictate, would be construed into lukewarmness or cowardice.

Leaving Wood Hall late in August, and spending a week with his family upon the road at the house of his friend Matthew Montagu, at Sandleford Priory, he arrived on the 3d of September at the village of Bath Easton,



where he designed to take up his quarters for the remainder of the vacation. "Delighted with the beauty of our new villa. Weather delicious. Afternoon and evening read and heard, out of doors, in a lovely arbor by the river. This is a beautiful country; our house exactly like Westmoreland, saving lakes." "I am now come," he says on the first Sunday after his arrival, "to a place where there is a prospect of my living in more quiet than I have long enjoyed. Oh! may I improve it for the best purposes. May I remember that such a precious opportunity as this place affords me of keeping my heart, and making a progress in divine things, may never occur again: that I shall have to render account of it as of a talent committed to my stewardship." He was "occupied chiefly on letters till arrears of correspondence were paid off. Last night had twenty letters ready. Reading a little Hume in dressing, also Greek Testament. Evening, on the water."

The public dangers which at this time beset the nation induced him to make his residence at Bath Easton, a season of more than usual devotion: and the record of his employments on the first Friday after his arrival there, shows how he usually spent the days which he devoted to religious services. "Friday, Sept. 9th, half-past eleven. Destined this day for fast-day, meo more, with that degree of abstinence which may best qualify my weak body to go through the day without molesting the soul. My chief objects in this act of humiliation are, to deplore the sins of our country, and still more my own grievous share of them; my manifold provocations of the righteous displeasure of my God and Saviour. To deprecate the wrath of God from our land, and draw down His blessings on us. I would also beg a blessing on our residence at this place, that my

time here may tend to my religious advancement, that it may be productive also of benefit to my-children and family, and to others with whom the providence of God connects me."

"Half-past twelve—Let me go now to confession and humiliation, in direct prayer, for my time wears away. Let me deplore my past sins—many years in which I lived without God in the world—then my sins since my having in some degree become acquainted with Him in 1785-6. My actual state—my not having duly improved my talents—my chief besetting sins." [Here a reference to a private paper carried about him.] "(My birth-day was worse kept this year than I have long known it, from its being my last day at a friend's house. This, therefore, to be a sort of birth-day review. I am come here into the arbor by the river side, and am quite secure from interruption.) How greatly are my sins aggravated by the extreme goodness to me of my God and Saviour! I am encumbered with blessings, my cup is so full of them as to overflow. During life all has gone well with me, so far as God has ordered matters, and all the evil has been the result of my own follies. All that I enjoy has been from God—all I suffer from myself. My temporal blessings are superior to those of almost any human being who ever existed. But then my spiritual! Born in the happiest country, at a season of the greatest enjoyment, for hitherto I have suffered nothing from the storms which have raged around me. In a condition of life perhaps the happiest of all, except that possibly a little lower might be both safer and happier, (because I can live less to myself, less in the privacy and quiet I am now enjoying,) but mine is surely one of the very happiest. Then as to what is personal—good natural talents,

though not duly improved, and injured by early neglect; a cheerful and naturally sweet temper, (a great blessing;) the want of that proud self-confidence, (though this has grown in me to the fault of too great diffidence,) which is unfavorable to the reception of religion; a most enjoyable constitution, though not a strong one; an ample fortune, and a generous disposition in money matters. (I speak of this as mere natural temper, not as having in it the smallest merit, for I hope, *at this moment*, I can feel that it is no more than any other natural instinct, except as referred to the will and power of God.) To these blessings have been added most affectionate friends, and near relatives." [Here a reference to his domestic relations.] "My being honored with the Abolition cause, is a great blessing.

"But far more my spiritual blessings. How few are there in Parliament on whom the mercy of God has been so bounteously vouchsafed! On none of the early acquaintances with whom I entered life. Praise the Lord, O my soul! and forget not all His benefits. Above all, let me adore God's unspeakable kindness and long-suffering, in not being prevented from calling me to His fold, by the foreknowledge which He had of my hardness of heart and ingratitude. Then the preventing grace of God. What else has prevented me from bringing a scandal on my profession and Thy cause?" [Here a reference to some occasions in which he supposed himself in especial danger.] "Let the impression of these incidents ever remain with me, to humble me, to keep me mindful how weak I am in myself, how constantly I need the grace of God, how carefully I should avoid all temptation but such as occurs in the path of duty.

"After having lamented my sins before God, that I may feel them the more, and the contrition which they should produce, let me meditate a while on the guilt of sin, on the majesty and holiness of God, on the base ingratitude and sottish stupidity of man. I will read (meditating way) Witherspoon's excellent sermon, 'A View of the Glory of God, humbling to the Soul.' O Lord! let Thy Spirit accompany me, let it make me see and feel towards sin as Thou dost, and long to be delivered from every remainder of my corruptions, and to be holy as Thou art holy. (I am reminded, by thinking I hear some body coming, to pray ejaculatorily to God, to keep me from peevishness if I am interrupted. I have taken the best precautions against it; let me desire this day particularly to be full of love, meekness, and self-denial.)

"It is near half-past two; I have been hitherto quite free from interruption, and even the fear of it. Let me now go to prayer, after a short meditation on the promises of God. I have been large, though how imperfect in confession. It remains for me to supplicate for the pardon of my sins, and for growth in grace—for a blessing on this place and its employments—for a blessing on my intercourse with others. (Constant previous ejaculatory prayer.) Intercession for country and mankind—slaves—enemies—then for servants—friends—enumeration of different classes, and wife and children. Then thanksgiving enumeration. O Lord! give me Thy Spirit to help me to pray, and praise Thee acceptably, to worship in spirit and in truth. Amen."

On the same day the following plan appears to have been entered in his diary. "As I am likely D. V. to continue here three months, and to enjoy more leisure than usual, I proceed to fix the objects of my attention,

and will be as diligent as a due care for the recovery of my health will admit. I will adhere to my plan as closely as I can, having employments suited to different states of understanding, so that without fatigue, I may yet be always employed. In the morning, I will try to get two or three hours for composition—drawing up and storing topics, etc., (after having read Brougham, or Colonial Policy, and Adam Smith.) I will have in reading a book for minor attention (into which class may come any novels, plays, or other works of imagination) for seasons when unfit for much mental application. I mean to read the Greek Testament for at least half an hour daily, and to meditate over parts before read with my morning prayers. Walking out, to learn passages by heart, and keep them up. In conversation to adhere to plan, to have topics ready. I must keep a time account, beginning to-morrow, and try to redeem time on Sundays for services, as on common days for general purposes; except that a walk, meditating and solitary, to be a part, when fine, of Sunday's occupations, for I never find my mind more lifted up to God, than when thus meditating *Sub Dio*. May the Lord bless my plan, and enable me to redeem the time in future, and to live by rule, (yet never peevish when broken in upon,) and whether I eat or drink, or whatever I do, to do all to the glory of God."

The following extracts are from his entry on the public fast-day in the succeeding month, the appointment of which he had himself been instrumental in procuring.

"It becomes me on this day to humble myself before the Lord; first, for national sins, those especially wherein I have any share. And alas! I may too justly be said to be chargeable with a measure of that guilt,

which I have not sufficiently tried to prevent. Have I then used my utmost endeavors to amend the public, or my own particular circle, or even my own family? Who knows but that if I had been sufficiently on the watch, and had duly improved all the opportunities of doing good, and preventing evil, which have been afforded me, many who are now strangers and enemies to God, might have become known and reconciled to Him? Many grievous sins, which greatly swell the sum of our national account, might never have existed. What openings for usefulness have I enjoyed as an M. P. both in and out of the House of Commons; as an author, actual and possible; as a friend, an acquaintance, a master, etc. Alas! which way soever I look, I see abundant cause for deep humiliation. How much guilt might I have kept out of existence, and consequently how much misery: East-Indian idolatries; internal profaneness; even slave trade. And especially, have I sufficiently supplicated God, and done my utmost in this most effectual way, by calling in His aid?

“Secondly, for my own manifold transgressions. These I have down on another paper; they are present with me, and I humbly hope I lament them before God. We know not what scenes we may be called on to witness. My own death may be at hand. Oh! then, while it is day, work out, O my soul! thy own salvation. Pray to God—

“For thyself—that thou mayest be accepted in the Beloved; that thou mayest be supported under whatever trials it may please God to expose thee to; and if it be His holy will, but not otherwise, that thou mayest be continued with thy wife and children in the enjoyment of domestic peace and happiness.

“For thy country—that God would have mercy on

us, and deliver us from the power of our enemies; that He would also bless to us our difficulties and dangers, and cause them to be the means of our turning to Him with repentance and holy obedience; that He would restore to us the blessing of peace, and sanctify to us our enjoyments.

“For our rulers—the King and his ministers, and all the public functionaries.

“For my friends, acquaintances, and connections, particularly for those whom I habitually remember in my prayers.” [Here a list.] “Another class.” [Here a list of his early connections, including many political friends.] “These are relics of old times. I would especially implore the divine mercy for Pitt, who is peculiarly exposed.

“Let me pray fervently and sincerely for our enemies, that God would have pity on them, that He would turn their hearts, etc.

“Let me pray for all my fellow-creatures, for all that are in pagan ignorance, particularly for the poor negroes, both in Africa and the West-Indies. O Lord! do Thou at length visit them with spiritual blessings, and a termination of their temporal sufferings. Amen.

“And to all my supplications and intercessions, let me add abundant and warm thanksgivings; for, O Lord! Thou hast been to us, and above all to me, abundant in loving-kindness. For our unequalled national blessings, both temporal and spiritual. Run them over in detail, whether as exemption from evils, or possession of goods, etc.

“For my own blessings. So peculiarly full a cup amidst so liberal a banquet. All around me are feasting, but mine is Benjamin’s mess. Consider, O my soul! thy country; the period of the world wherein thy

lot is cast ; thy station in life ; thy personal circumstances as to body and mind ; thy externals—rank, fortune, favor with men, and especially numerous, kind, and useful friends ; the events of thy life ; thy having been kept out of office, and too intimate connection with political companions ; thy being kept from utter falling, etc.” [Here an enumeration of particulars like that before given.]

Such was his preparation against those perils to which none but the careless were indifferent.

But while his attention was thus directed to the common alarm, he was preserved from one of those imminent and unexpected dangers which continually surround our path. He was a constant observer of the advice of Bishop Berkeley, “that modern scholars would, like the ancients, meditate and converse in walks and gardens, and open air.” His favorite haunt at this time was a retired meadow, which bordered on the Avon. A steep bank shaded by some fine trees, one of which by its projection formed a promontory in a deep part of the stream, was his common seat. On the 25th of October, he says : “Walked with pencil and book, and wrote. A charming day. I was sitting by the river-side, with my back to the water, on a portable seat, when suddenly it struck me that it was not quite safe. Writing, I might be absent, and suddenly slip off, etc. I moved, therefore, a few yards, and placed my stool on the grass, when in four or five minutes it suddenly broke, and I fell flat on my back, as if shot. Had it happened five minutes sooner, as I can not swim, I must, a thousand to one, have been drowned, for I sat so that I must have fallen backwards into the river. I had not the smallest fear or idea of the seat’s breaking with me ; and it is very remarkable, that I had



rather moved about while by the river, which would have been more likely to break it, whereas I sat quite still when on the grass. A most providential escape. Let me praise God for it."

Several of his private observations during this summer and autumn, are too characteristic to be omitted. When visiting a house where there was much society of a trifling kind, "Sad work, indeed," he says, "oaths of minor kind, most unprofitable talk, alas! I would not live at 'a Place' to be subject to much of this, for almost any consideration. Quite tired of our relaxation. What absurd work!" At another time: "A servant here is dangerously ill. I know they have no objection to my talking to him, yet I feel a sad lukewarmness, and even averseness to it. Did Christ feel the same towards me and other poor sinners? Whatever be the cause of my disinclination, shyness, pride, what it may, let me not search out for reasons to justify the abstaining from what I wish to avoid, but obey the plain primary dictates of conscience." "Praying with the sick servant"—"I saw the poor man for twenty minutes, and prayed with him"—appear as entries almost daily during the residue of his visit.

In another place he says: "Nothing could exceed the kindness with which our friends received us. Alas! it grieves me to see a family, in all respects so amiable, fooled at all by the world. Their wealth is their bane. It connects them with fashionable, thoughtless neighbors, connects their children with frequenters of scenes of dissipation. Oh! may God bless them! How hard is it for them that have riches, to enter into, and keep in, the narrow road! Beware, O my soul!"

Among his Sunday's observations, he says: "I have allowed so little time for evening devotions, that my

prayers have been too often hurried over. 'Tis my old fault; my profane studies, or my letters, engross me. Yet if we be alienated from God at all, it matters not by what it is, whether our hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, drunkenness, or cares of this life: whether with literature, or pleasure, or ambition. I have often on a Saturday evening found in myself, though I hope not allowed, this kind of sentiment: 'Oh! I shall have time enough for religious occupations to-morrow, and how shall I find sufficient employment for the Sunday?' O Lord! this indicates a sad want of love. How different David's feelings, Psalm 84. Oh! quicken me in Thy righteousness. Give me all holy affections in their just measure of vigor and force."

His journal, in which he had lately inserted many notices concerning his state of mind, concludes with this striking caution: "Let me beware, lest I make Christ the minister of sin, by comforting myself too easily when any temptation has prevailed over me, with the reflection, that I have a remedy at hand; it is only to humble myself and implore pardon, and, the promises being sure, to obtain forgiveness. There is in truth no other way; but beware, O my soul! lest thou provoke God to withdraw His Spirit and leave thee to thy natural weakness. Not, I hope, that I sin in the view of this willingness of God to forgive, but I fear, after having discovered the workings of corruption, that I too easily take comfort. Let me rather, when I have thus detected in myself the humiliating marks of my imperfect state, go softly for some time. Let me think of that God and Saviour with whom I have trifled; of my base ingratitude; of the aggravating circumstances of my sins; of the multitude of the mercies which have been poured out on me; of the signal

advantages and privileges with which I have been favored. These reflections, through the goodness of God and the working of His Spirit, may produce a more settled lowliness and watchfulness of mind."

His health, at all times weak, had been so shattered by the fatigues of the preceding session, as to create great alarm amongst his nearest friends. The quiet of the vacation, early hours, and the Bath waters, had in a great measure restored him to his average state; though he "was reminded by" his "sensations that" his "frame was not susceptible of that thorough repair which it used to receive at Bath in earlier days." How he would bear the renewed fatigues of London, seemed a doubtful question, and one friend wrote repeatedly and urgently to press upon him the duty of withdrawing altogether from public life. But he was not of a temper to retire and leave his task half done; and though he was constitutionally inclined to defer too much to the opinion of those whose moral qualities he valued highly, in this instance happily his own view of duty was unshaken.

He returned to London at the meeting of Parliament, and entered the House while the King's speech was reading. "How I love to be quiet with my family," he says; "how long a period of retirement did it appear on looking forward, and now it is gone like a dream, and I am about to plunge into the bustle of life again."

On the approach of Christmas and the recess, he was as usual anxious to turn it to the best advantage. "Who knows but that it may be my last preparation for eternity!" "My heart is in a sad state. Oh! heal my backslidings. Bring me back to Thee. Take away the heart of stone, and give me a heart of flesh. Blessed be God that I am not now about to plunge immediately

into the bustle and hurry of London and parliamentary business, but that a recess is before me, in which I may have the means of some privacy, and opportunities of meditation and devotional abstraction. O Lord! do Thou vouchsafe me Thy quickening Spirit; without Thee I can do nothing. Mortify in me all ambition, vanity, vain-glory, worldliness, pride, selfishness, aversion from God, and fill me with love, peace, and all the fruits of the Spirit." "This is a dull day with me; my mind is sadly heavy. I see with my judgment the great truths which this day commemorates; that He who enjoyed the glory of the Father before the world was, came down, emptied Himself, and became a wailing infant for our sakes. I see that it was unutterable love, but I seem incapable of feeling any thing. I have got up early this last week, and have had some three quarters, or an hour, for private devotion in a morning. I hoped to have perceived on this day the blessed effects of it; but I believe I have too much reckoned on it as a settled thing, as any effect follows its cause. *Res delicata est Spiritus Dei*. Perhaps this dull, spiritless frame is designed as a punishment to me for this thought. But this same course, with more constant humility and watchfulness, must be right. O Lord! enable me to press on. How wonderful is this callousness! a sort of mental paralysis. It may not, however, be without its uses; it may make me feel more how absolutely helpless I am in myself; may keep me more simply dependent on the grace and Spirit of God. O Lord! I know not what I am, but to Thee I flee for refuge! I would surrender myself to Thee, trusting Thy precious promises, and against hope believing in hope. Thou art the same yesterday, to-day, and forever; and, therefore, however cold and dull I am, yet, waiting on the

Lord, I trust I shall at length renew my strength. Even now my heart seems to grow warmer; oh! let me fall again to prayer and praise, and implore fresh supplies of strength and grace."

"Give me, Lord, spiritual understanding; let me drink of the water of life. To Thee, O Lord! I fly for succor; Thy promises are sure! and Thou wilt cast out none that come to Thee. *There* is my stay; otherwise thou mightest well cast me out; but by commanding us to 'have grace,' 'to grow in grace,' Thou showest that we may. Oh! let me then rouse myself, lest, having preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away. I have found my heart much affected by looking at past entries in my journal; and at the idea, that, to the eye of God, all my various crimes, vanities, and follies, are present, in their full, unabated, unsoftened size and character, as they at the time appeared to me. O Lord! enable me to purify myself as Thou art pure." "I humbly hope I feel deeply humbled at the footstool of God's throne, and prostrate I plead the atoning blood of Christ, and humbly trust in His promises of pardon and of grace. When I look forward to the scene before me, and think how ill I have gone on, I shrink back with dread. But, O Lord! I cast my care on Thee; I flee to Thee for succor. Saviour of sinners, save me. Help, Lord, help; watch over me, and guide and guard me. Amen. Amen."

It is no slight proof of the high measure of holiness to which he had attained, that he should have been thus lowly in his own sight, whilst those who most continually watched his conduct, could only give God thanks for the great grace vouchsafed to him.

It is delightful to contrast with his own language the observation of one who, with as holy and as humble a

soul, was just entering on his brief but glorious course. Henry Martyn was now passing a few weeks in London, and was brought by Mr. Grant to Broomfield. Here he saw Mr. Wilberforce surrounded by his family and friends. Their "conversation," is the language of Mr. Martyn's private journal, "during the whole day was edifying, agreeable to what I should think right for two godly senators: planning some means of bringing before Parliament propositions for bettering the moral state of the colony of Botany Bay. At evening worship Mr. Wilberforce expounded sacred Scripture with serious plainness, and prayed in the midst of his large household."

His perfect freedom from the taint of party spirit, kept his natural affections unimpaired amidst the hardening incidents of public life.

It helped him also to maintain a sober estimate of their relative importance, amidst the crowd of objects by which he was surrounded; and he would frequently lament the want of this safeguard in other public men, even when he formed a favorable judgment of their real principles.

No friendship for any one, however, was sufficient to induce him to swerve from the path of duty, and we find from his correspondence, as well as from the entries in his diary, that he was most urgent at this time in opposing some measures of the government which were calculated to bring about a desecration of the Lord's day, under the specious pretext of the urgency of the danger of invasion to which the nation was exposed, and of which he was himself deeply convinced there was great danger. While he comments on the course of the ministry, he records the ejaculation: "Lord, direct me aright, and let me preserve an easy

mind, resigned to Thee and fixed on Thy favor. All else is vanity." His Sunday thoughts are: "I am distressed just now by the state of political parties. My distress arises partly, I hope, from real doubts how I ought to act; yet I fear there is also a mixture of worldly fear, and also a weakness of nature which, though not unamiable, ought not to be suffered to influence conduct, or even to discompose me. O Lord! to Thee I will pray to enlighten my understanding and direct my judgment; and then to strengthen me to take the path of duty with a firm and composed, though feeling mind. Poor Addington! (Lord Sidmouth) with all his faults I feel for him; but what a lesson does he read me! Had he really acted up to his principles he might probably have been above his present difficulties. O Lord! Thou rulest. Thy will be done. And keep me from being absorbed by, or too solicitous about, worldly things, remembering that a Christian is to regard and feel himself a stranger and a pilgrim, and to have his portion, his conversation, his treasure, his country in heaven. Be these my habitual feelings, through Thy grace, O Lord!"

## CHAPTER XX.

VARIOUS entries in his journal prove the anxiety with which he labored to maintain a friendly feeling between Addington and Pitt, but ineffectually. At length the disaffection of the people caused the King to place Pitt once more at the head of government.

The new ministry had no sooner entered upon office than Mr. Wilberforce renewed his motion for the Abolition of the Slave Trade. The question had seemed to slumber for the last four years. In 1800 and 1801, the plan of abolishing by a general convention had appeared too promising to be risked by a parliamentary defeat. In 1802, the important object of preventing new crimes in Trinidad had produced such delay that the session had closed before the measure had made any progress; and in the last year Mr. Wilberforce's purpose of securing the earliest season of discussion was defeated, first by his own illness, and then by the public danger. The time for a renewal of his motion had at length arrived, and it was under fresh and favorable auspices that he resumed his arms.

Upon the 30th of May, 1804, he moved the first reading of his Bill. Though complimented by one of his opponents for his ingenuity in finding new arguments on so hackneyed a subject, he was himself discontented



with the spirit with which he introduced the question. "I never felt so 'discomposed, and stiff, and little at ease on any former occasion, and I own I think I did not do near so well as usual, though the Speaker said he hoped I had satisfied myself, as I had done every body else. The anti-abolitionists made no stand in speaking. They failed no less on a division. We divided 124 against 49. All the Irish members voted with us. There was a great Irish dinner, 33 or 34 dining together. Lord De Blaquiere gave my health as a toast, and they all came and voted for us. Lee and Lord De Blaquiere spoke and did good. Addington in a speech of one minute opposed us as impracticable, and blindly threw out a Committee. Barham with us. Pitt and Fox a few words. On coming home found Brougham, Stephen, Macaulay, Grant, Henry Thornton, etc. John Villiers came, and he, I, Stephen, Brougham, and William Smith, talked over and settled Bill. Stephen and I had more talk afterwards. To bed late."

Thus was the Abolition of the Slave Trade for a third time voted by the House of Commons; but not as formerly, through the hesitating concurrence of a scarce perceptible majority. Its supporters were now as overwhelming in numbers as they had always been in argument. From that night the issue of the question was clear. The venerable Newton expressed his doubts whether he, who was "within two months of entering upon his eightieth year, should live to see the accomplishment of the work: but the prospect," he adds, "will give me daily satisfaction so long as my declining faculties are preserved." Mr. Wilberforce replied :

*To the Rev. John Newton.*

“PALACE YARD, *Friday*.

“MY DEAR SIR: I steal one moment from business and bustle to thank you most cordially for your kind congratulations. I really scarcely deserve them for not having called on you for so long a time, yet I must do myself the justice to declare, that my having neglected so to do has in no degree arisen from any want of that affection and esteem which I must ever feel for you. O my dear sir! it is refreshing to me to turn away my eye from the vanities with which it is surrounded, and to fix it on you, who appear in some sort to be already (like Moses descending from the mount) enlightened with the beams of that blessed day which is beginning to rise on you, as you approach to the very boundaries of this world's horizon. May you soon enjoy it in its meridian lustre. Pray for us, my dear sir, that we also may be enabled to hold on our way, and at last to join with you in the shout of victory.

“I fear the House of Lords. But it seems as if He who has the hearts of all men in His power was beginning to look with pity on the sufferings of those poor oppressed fellow-creatures whose cause I assert. I shall ever reckon it the greatest of all my temporal favors, that I have been providentially led to take the conduct of this business.

“In extreme haste, I remain, my dear sir,

“Yours affectionately and sincerely,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

But many vexatious difficulties still opposed the progress of the Bill. Some friends deserted him, and even of Mr. Pitt he says, “never so dissatisfied with

him as at this time." Through all his trials, however, he persevered with a patient determination which nothing short of the holy principles by which he was actuated could supply. Nor did he allow the one object to absorb his attention and prevent his active co-operation in other plans for the benefit of his fellow-men.

"May 2d. Town—City Bible Society general meeting—they forced me to speak. 13th. After much doubt, resolved and went to hear Hall at meeting—very energetic and simply vehement on 1 Tim. 'Glorious gospel.' He seemed to labor with a sense of the weight and importance of his subject. Truly evangelical also. Excellent indeed—language simple—thoughts just, deep, and often elevated—excelling in experimental applications of Scripture, often with immense effect—begins calmly and simply, warms as proceeds, till vehement, and energetic, and impassioned. All of us struck with him. Simeon with us—his first hearing of Hall. 14th. Breakfasted at Henry Thornton's to meet Hall—Hannah More and Patty. Hall very clever, unaffected, and pleasing in conversation. Town—Hatchard's—Suppression of Vice Society—read their report of proceedings—highly useful. Lord Radstock had in a month got them about 153 members, many of them of high rank.

"Town. Sierra Leone Committee. House. Fever Institution. Brougham and Grant dined—much talk. Brougham very unassuming, animated, and apparently well inclined to religion." Such are the daily entries in his journal.

His own choice would have been a very different life. "Dined quietly," he says, "for the first time this age. How delightful is a little peace in the country!" At

times, indeed, as he tells Mr. Hey, he was disposed to seek more quiet by a change of residence. "Broomfield, (I wish you knew it better,)" for even at this moment his hospitable spirit would have added to the crowd of friends around him, "is a scene of almost as much bustle as Old Palace Yard. So much so, that the incessant *worry* (it is an expressive word) of this house makes me think of quitting it, and I should not hesitate for a moment, were it not for our having several valuable friends so near us. The Henry Thorntons, Stephens, Teignmouths, Venn, etc. I consider the neighborhood in which I fix myself a point of still more importance, now that I am the father of several children. I should scarcely be able to avoid occasional visitings among my neighbors wherever I might live, and what irreparable injury might my young people receive from their accidental conversations with those who, by courtesy of language, are called friends. I have already discovered that children are very sagacious and attentive observers, and shrewd in detecting inconsistencies. Often when they seem to be playing about the room, heedless of all that is going forward, it appears afterwards, that they heard, and remembered too, the conversation which was going forward."

Leaving Broomfield in the beginning of September, he moved with his whole family to Lyme, in Dorsetshire, where he "hoped to enjoy something of to me the greatest of all luxuries, as well as the best of all medicines, quiet. I allow myself two or three hours' open air daily, and have enjoyed more than one solitary stroll with a Testament, a Cowper, or a Psalter, for my companion." He delighted to exchange the bustle of his public life for this domestic privacy. "Here," he breaks off in the midst of a letter to Hannah More, "I

am irresistibly summoned to a contest at marbles, and in these days of the rights of man, as I would not furnish any valid ground for rebellion, and remembered I was at *Lyme*, I obeyed the call." He could now too indulge, in some degree, his keen relish of natural beauties, and the common air. He "read much out of doors, and wrote with a pencil," and "had many a delightful walk along the hoarse, resounding shore, meditating on better things than poor, blind Homer knew or sung of."

Yet this was no idle time. He tells Lord Muncaster: "You are not however to suppose me idle here, because I am not employed in business of the same kind as that which worries me in town. I scarce ever remember to have been more occupied. A friend has found me a good deal of work in revising an intended publication. I own I am selfish enough to grudge a little the trouble; for it sometimes costs me as much to piece in an addition which I think necessary, as it would to write a new chapter. I have also been scribbling a little thing for the *Christian Observer*, which I will send you, but you must not mention its author; and another for a similar work, for the benefit of our great cause. Thus I have given you a hint of some of my operations. But my letters are my grand employment; it is shocking to say it, but I brought to this place a box full of unanswered epistles, and each day has supplied a new demand. But surely I am become as great an egotist as the celebrated counsellor himself. Here have I filled all this sheet with an account of myself and my own avocations. It is not, however, egotism that is censured, but egotism in the wrong place. If I were to entertain the House of Commons with the manner in which I spent my time at *Lyme*, I should justly

become the object of ridicule ; but not in writing to a friend, who loves to hook on and run in couples with me through the twenty-four hours, let me be employed how I may."

" Wrote an article for the *Edinburgh Review* ; answer to Defence of the Slave Trade on Grounds of Humanity. Also for *Christian Observer*—a review of Lord Chatham's Letters, with which I took pains ; a paper on Baxter ; and another introductory to a Narrative Series. Much of the morning spent in looking over Stephen's Manuscript, and Hannah More's intended publication on the Education of a Princess, and adding a good deal of new matter."

Three months passed happily away in the varied employments incident to his position as a father and friend, with no little devotion to the promoting the cause of Abolition by correspondence, and by directing the efforts of his friends and coadjutors. To Mr. Babington he writes : " We have enjoyed much domestic happiness, and I grow very fond of so quiet a life, and turn with disgust from the noise and turmoil of a London life. However, I would remember to keep always mindful of the apostle's words : ' Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.' " Politics had been almost banished from Lyme, or reached it only as a distant sound.

The 1st of January, 1805, found him " too busy to write much, yet desiring to record the goodness of the Lord ; His great forbearance and long-suffering ; His kindness during the last year in preserving us and our dear children, and enabling us to enjoy so much domestic happiness and social comfort, especially at this place. But I must stop and go to prayer."

This quiet happiness was soon disturbed. Upon

the 5th of January he "heard from Pitt that an opposition was expected the first day of the session," and judged "it right to come up." Mr. Pitt's summons was brief and earnest.

"DOWNING STREET, *Jan. 4, 1805.*

"MY DEAR WILBERFORCE: I have hardly time for more than one word, and that word, I am afraid, must be '*Come,*' though I say so with reluctance under the circumstances you mention. But by my last accounts, opposition is collecting all its force, and it is therefore very important that we should secure as full an attendance as possible. There are a great many points on which I shall be very impatient to talk with you, but on which I have no time to write.

"Ever affectionately yours,

"W. P."

This call he at once obeyed, casting only one lingering look at the peaceful quietness which he was leaving. "If it were not best to acquiesce cheerfully and entirely in the will of God, I should grieve at being so poorly to-day, because it is probably my last Sunday before I go to London to engage in the hurly-burly scene I there dwell in. I feel like one who is about to launch into a stormy sea, and who knows from fatal experience how little his own powers are equal to its buffetings. O Lord! do Thou fit me for it. Enable me to seek Thy glory, and not my own; to watch unto prayer; to wait diligently on God; to love Him and my Redeemer from the heart; and to be constrained by this love to live actively and faithfully, devoting all my faculties and powers to His service, and the benefit of my fellow-creatures. Especially let me discharge with fidelity

and humility the duties of my proper station, as unto the Lord, and not unto men; submitting patiently to the will of God, if it be His will that we should be defeated in our effort to deliver our country from the load of guilt and shame which now hangs round her neck, and is, perhaps, like a gangrene, eating out her vital strength, and preparing, though gradually, the consummation of her ruin. O Lord! do Thou lead and guide me.

“On looking back, what sad proofs have I had lately of the inward workings of ambition, on seeing others, once my equals, or even my inferiors, rise to situations of high worldly rank, station, power, and splendor! I bless God, I do not acquiesce in these vicious tempers, but strive against them, and not, I hope, in vain. Remember, O my soul! no man can serve two masters. Have I not a better portion than this world can bestow? Would not a still higher situation place both me and my children in less favorable circumstances for making our calling and election sure? Covet not then, O my soul! these objects of worldly anxiety. Let God be thy portion, and seek the true riches, the glory and honor which are connected with immortality. Yet turn not from those who have these honors with cynical or envious malignity, but rejoice in their temporal comfort and gratification, while you pray for them, and strive to do them good by preventing them from being injured by their exaltation.”

He reached Broomfield upon the 12th of January, and enters in his diary: “Through God’s good providence we are all returned in peace and safety; and now, before I plunge into the stormy sea I am about to enter, I would pray to God through Christ, by the Holy Spirit, to strengthen me with might in the



inner man; to enable me to walk by faith, to let my light shine before men, and to become meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. O my soul! remember thy portion is not here. Mind not high things. Be not conformed to this world. Commit thy way unto the Lord, and delight thyself in God. Let the men of this world pass by thee in the race of honors, but thine be the honor which cometh of God, thine the glory which is connected with immortality."

The following morning he "called on Pitt, who told me of the offer of negotiation from Bonaparte. His schemes large and deep. His hopes sanguine." "You will, I know," he heard from Mr. Pitt, "be glad, independent of politics, that Addington and I have met as friends; but I hope you will also not be sorry to hear that that event will lead to political reünion." He was extremely pleased with this reconciliation between "two friends who had no public ground of difference." He was gratified too by Mr. Pitt's anxiety to acquaint him with it. "It showed me that he understood my real feelings." Upon the 1st of February he "called on Pitt, and walked with him round the Park. Pleased with his statements of disposition not to quarrel with Addington." "'I am sure,' he said, 'that you are glad to hear that Addington and I are at one again.' And then he added, with a sweetness of manner which I shall never forget, 'I think they are a little hard upon us in finding fault with our making it up again, when we have been friends from our childhood, and our fathers were so before us, while they say nothing to Grenville for uniting with Fox, though they have been fighting all their lives.'"

In spite of the accession of Lord Sidmouth's parti-

sans, Mr. Pitt felt that his majorities were feeble, and wished to put aside all questions which could divide his friends. On this ground he pressed earnestly by private remonstrance for the postponement of the Abolition question; but Mr. Wilberforce would never "make that holy cause subservient to the interest of a party;" and being convinced by the experience of the former session that he must begin at once, if he would carry any measure through the House of Lords, on the 6th of February he gave notice of his motion. Mr. Pitt could estimate his motives—he "called upon me and was very kind about it." The Bill was "read a first time on the 19th, and the second reading fixed for the Thursday se'nnight." He had no fears about the House of Commons, but that night brought one of those reverses by which his constancy was so often tried during the twenty years of this hard struggle. After a "morning of business as usual," and "eating at home in a hurry," he went down to the House on the "second reading of the Abolition Bill. I said nothing at opening, and not enough at the close, but did not expect such an issue. Besides, felt as if I could not go well. Beat, alas! 70 to 77. Sad work! Though I thought we might be hard run from the face of the House, I could not expect the defeat, and all expressed astonishment. The Irish members absent, or even turned against us."

This failure pained him deeply. "I never felt so much on any parliamentary occasion. I could not sleep after first waking at night. The poor blacks rushed into my mind, and the guilt of our wicked land." Yet he had no doubts of his ultimate success. "I bless God," are his private reflections on the Sunday following this disappointment, "that I feel more than of late

I have done, that humble, peaceful, confiding hope in the mercy of God, reconciled in Christ Jesus, which tranquillizes the mind, and creates a desire after that blessed state, where we shall be completely delivered from the bondage of our corruptions, as well as from all our bodily pains and sicknesses, and all our mental anxieties and griefs: where the injustice, oppression, and cruelty, the wickedness, the falsehood, the selfishness, the malignity of this bad world shall be no more; but peace, and truth, and love, and holiness, shall prevail forever. O Lord! purify my heart, and make me meet for that blessed society. Alas! how sadly do I still find myself beset by my constitutional corruptions! I trust the grief I felt on the defeat of my Bill on Thursday last proceeded from sympathy with the wretched victims whose sufferings are before my mind's eye, yet I fear in part, also, less pure affections mixed and heightened the smart—regret that I had not made a greater and better fight in the way of speaking; vexation at the shame of the defeat. O Lord! purify me. I do not, God be merciful to me, deserve the signal honor of being the instrument of putting an end to this atrocious and unparalleled wickedness. But, O Lord! let me earnestly pray Thee to pity these children of affliction, and to terminate their unequal wrongs; and oh! direct and guide me in this important conjuncture! that I may act so as may be most agreeable to Thy will. Amen."

On the following day he told Lord Muncaster:

"LONDON, *March 4, 1805.*

"ALAS! my dear Muncaster, from the fatal moment of our defeat on Thursday evening, I have had a damp struck into my heart. I could not sleep either on

Thursday or Friday night without dreaming of scenes of depredation and cruelty on the injured shores of Africa, and by a fatal connection diffusing the baleful effects through the interior of that vast continent. I really have had no spirits to write to you. Alas! my friend, in what a world do we live! Mammon is the god we adore, as much almost as if we actually bowed the knee to his image."

## CHAPTER XXI.

To the rejection of the Abolition Bill was soon added another trial of his feelings, which was very distressing. He had long been in habits of political association with Lord Melville, (Mr. Dundas,) and though he had just cause to complain of want of honor in his conduct on the abolition question, and the India bill, he had ever maintained a friendly relation to him. His integrity was at this time called in question, and though nothing definite was publicly known, rumor charged him with having derived personal profit from "jobs" in the department of government under his control. When the report of the Committee of Investigation was published, there could be no room for doubt of his complicity in transactions which were highly censurable. The administration could ill afford to lose the shrewd and practical talents of Lord Melville, and Mr. Pitt could not bring himself to abandon one whom he had always looked to as a supporter of his measures. Mr. Wilberforce felt himself under the influence of higher and holier principles. He had no choice. To Mr. Hey, he wrote: "You will concur with me as to the necessity of marking strongly our sense of such an instance of misconduct. The rather because it is not religion, but popular opinion, which among us at this day, is the general standard of practice. This consideration, though I

kept it back, had great weight with me; for if any one, after acting as Lord Melville did, had been screened by his party from punishment, and had been well received in the world, (and a man's own party is the world to him,) there is no saying what might be the effect in a few years, on the purity of our political system." The friendly feelings for Lord Melville had always been blended with disapprobation of his principles, the faithlessness of which had been exhibited more than once. Mr. Wilberforce says of him: "People have thought him a mean and intriguing creature, but he was in many respects a fine, warm-hearted fellow." He said in the House of Commons, that he "neither could nor would tell any man how £10,000 or £20,000 went." Mr. Wilberforce watched anxiously the progress of the debate on the resolutions for censure, hoping some valid argument for defense might be presented by his friends. None such was brought forward, and at last he rose reluctantly to press upon the House the claims of justice. From the seat he occupied, he was compelled as he looked toward the Speaker, to meet the eye of Mr. Pitt, who was watching with intense earnestness to catch the first intimation of the course he would take. Mr. W. says: "It required no little effort to resist the fascination of that penetrating eye, from which Lord Erskine was always thought to shrink." He stated simply but forcibly his impression of Lord Melville's fault, and then impressed upon the House the importance of deciding on the strictest grounds of justice. "We it is who are now on our trial before the moral sense of England: and if we shrink from it, deeply shall we hereafter deplore our conduct."

On reaching home, he says: "A stormy night. I spoke late, and from the state of men's minds, with a

good deal of effect. House divided 216 against 216. Speaker decided against Government. Adjourned at half-past five, (A.M.) Could not get cool in mind or body. Bed, and slept till twelve." The effect of his speech was very great. Having thus discharged his duty in the case, he refused to violate his sense of delicacy, and feelings of friendship for the delinquent, by any further participation in the proceedings.

To Lord Muncaster he writes : \* \* \* \* "Is it possible to conceive of a man of his known good sense, acting so foolishly? Pitt feels it deeply. I never saw him so *quailed* as on Wednesday night, and part of Monday also; and this, in my opinion, did him honor, by proving that, though so invincibly firm when all was well within, he could not put a good face on it when he was defending a bad cause. I spoke so very late, that little of what I said appeared in any of the newspapers; but from various circumstances, I spoke with more effect than almost ever happened to me in the House of Commons. I am reproached with having materially contributed to the catastrophe. To all Pitt's and Melville's friends I say, and most truly, that whatever may be the consequences of this affair, and whether the administration may or may not be able to stand, it is perfectly clear that they could not have weathered the storm, and rode out the gale, with Melville in the vessel, after the publication of the Report." Honor and party spirit were not the standard of his judgment. The language of his private journal at this time is: "I have difficult and trying questions before me in Parliament. I will pray for wisdom, and pursue the path presented by conscience, and then peace will follow. Lord, give me wisdom. Do Thou enable me to act to-morrow, honestly, uprightly, without fear of

man, or any other unlawful motive. O Lord! give me Thy wisdom, and set me above this world, and all that it contains."

He had been, as usual, overburdened with business throughout the session of Parliament. "This living in Palace Yard," he complains, "is destructive to my time. In the morning I rise between eight and nine, (being useless if I have not had my full *dose* of sleep.) I dress, hearing Terry [his reader] from half-past nine to ten. Prayers and breakfast at a quarter after ten. From thence constant callers, or breakfasters—proper people—and my house not clear commonly, and I able to get out, till near one. Then I have often to call at the public offices, and if a committee morning, I have scarce any writing time before dinner. Then after House, friends—Babington, Grant, Henry Thornton, and others drop in, so that I get scarcely any time for thinking on political topics, or preparing for debates. A residence near London would withdraw me from company, and give me more time. Yet I dread the separation which my leaving Broomfield would make from my chief friends, the Thorntons, Teignmouths, Stephens, Venn, Macaulay, with whom I now live like a brother."

His feelings were at this time tried again by "three of his warmest supporters in Yorkshire, who all solicited" of him "a living for M. I am forced to decline asking. I fear they will be affronted, yet God is able to turn the hearts of men as the rivers of water."

This was no unusual trial of his firmness. On another occasion he says: "I am much hurt by solicitations from my friend N., for a living. It *hurts* me greatly to appear ungrateful to one who has been so kind to me, and it may materially affect my interest



also. But I must adhere to my principles, and trust the event to God. If I lose my seat really on this account, can I be removed more honorably? It would be a minor martyrdom."

His letters during this autumn bear marks of his nearness to the fountain-head of political intelligence. He not unfrequently "drove into town to see Pitt," and "had much talk with him upon political topics, finding him very open and kind."

An extract taken at random from the daily entries in his journal, would show the entire absorption of his time and powers by public affairs and those matters of a philanthropic nature in which he was so deeply interested, and which his public position enabled him to promote so efficiently. The session of Parliament closed in the middle of July, but family circumstances still detained him in the neighborhood of London. "When you talked of intruding on my leisure," he writes to Mr. Hey, "something between a smile and a sigh, and partaking of the nature of both, escaped me." And to Lord Muncaster: "I long for the rocks and mountains of Cumberland: the very idea refreshes me, though it excites a little of the *maladie du pays*. I do not know one worldly thing I should like so much as bringing my family to share in the delight with which I feed on your romantic scenery." Even during the recess, he could never command his time, and his diary affords many instructive lessons. Thus: "Home to dinner, where by accident, a strange assemblage. Venn, Pearson, Farish, Waugh, and Brougham, all silenced by each other: pity! How true it is, that when we see the interior of things in this world, we always see the mementoes of human weakness and corruption. R. told me his uncle was peevish and impracticable,

forgot himself. Age, infirmities ; hard task at times, etc. Alas ! alas ! earth is but earth, and its inhabitants earthly. O heaven, heaven ! thou seat of perfect love and holiness, where all infirmities will be done away !” On the recommendation of Lord Melville, Sir Charles Middleton, the friend of Wilberforce and Hannah More, had been created Lord Barham, and elevated to the post of First Lord of the Admiralty, and on this occasion, Mr. W. writes to Hannah More :

*To Mrs. Hannah More.*

“ NEAR LONDON, *Sept. 9, 1805.*

“ MY DEAR FRIEND : Having my pen in hand, I must chat with you for a few minutes, though they must be but few. I quite rejoiced in your having the Bishop of London under your roof : I can picture to myself his innocent playfulness and affectionate vivacity, and how very happy he would be with you, and you all with him. I wonder you could keep it all to yourself, for it is really true, that when I heard he was to be with you, I was very near scribbling to you on the moment, to wish you joy of an event which would give you so much fair pleasure. How truly amiable he is !

“ I have no comfort in public affairs, except that our friend Lord Barham is at the helm ; for though never man came to it in such trying times, (this is especially true in his department,) yet I can not but hope that we shall see an illustration of ‘ Him that honoreth Me, I will honor.’

“ With the experience of the last war fresh in my recollection, how can I participate in those visions of glory, in which I fear a friend of mine is even still ready to indulge, though I am afraid they will never receive

a local habitation and a name? Well—the Lord reign-eth. We are more and more driven for comfort to that bottom, and it is sound anchoring ground which will never fail us.

“Have you received any more intimations from high places, about the disposition to act up to your hints? I greatly rejoice in your having written that book, on every ground, both public and personal.

“Poor Lady Waldegrave has been with us, and on the whole as well as one could expect, though sadly weather-beaten. Oh! what a change will the next world make to her! Her voyage has been tempestuous, but I doubt not she will reach the desired haven. And ‘Oh! the thought that thou art safe!’ Yes, my dear friend, there is nothing else worth living for. May we more and more feel this great truth, and live accordingly.”

His want of confidence in the national councils did not arise merely from his “recollection of the last war.” His spirits were lowered by the consideration of the national sins. He reflected that there had been few, if any, symptoms of general amendment. “The parliamentary recognition of Sunday drilling has added, I must say, to the apprehensions which the slave trade, and the contemptuous treatment of Christianity in our colonial possessions, from first to last, have so long infused. I have been of late making strong representations to Lord Castlereagh, on the dreadful state of morals in New South-Wales. I have been assured on good authority, that of near two thousand children now in the colony, there are not one hundred who receive any education at all.”

One quarter, however, offered a less gloomy, though

not less affecting prospect; and he did but share the feelings of the nation, at the news of Nelson's victory and death, when he was "so overcome that he could not go on reading for tears." There was too little of this chastened spirit in the official announcement of the great victory of Trafalgar. This was Lord Muncaster's remark upon their tone. "There would methinks have been something noble, dignified, and most uncommonly interesting in the great minister of the empire gratefully acknowledging as it were before the whole people, the divine blessing given to the arms of the country. What *quizzism* could he have been afraid of, adopting the language of the hero victors? Lord Burleigh had not this fear when he made his reply to Walsingham. Lest you should not recollect it, I will briefly state it to you. Sir Francis Walsingham had been waiting to confer with him on some business or other, and at length Lord Burleigh coming in from prayers, Sir Francis jocularly (which in the cant of the present day would be styled quizzingly) said to him, 'that he wished himself so good a servant of God as Lord Burleigh, but that he had not been at church for a week past.' To which Lord Burleigh thus gravely replied: 'I hold it meet for us to ask God's grace to keep *us* sound of heart, who have so much in our power; and to direct us to our well-doing for all the people, whom it is easy for us to injure and ruin; and herein, my good friend, the special blessing seemeth meet to be discreetly asked and wisely worn.' This single trait of Lord Burleigh's character, standing upon most excellent authority, has always lifted him more in my estimation, than all his wise policies and councils. I should have been truly delighted and gratified, to have had the public proof I have alluded to, that somewhat the same train of ideas

governed the great minister of our day. Lord Collingwood appears to be a worthy successor of Nelson."

Mr. Wilberforce heartily assented to these views.

"YOXALL LODGE, *Nov.* 25, 1805.

"MY DEAR MUNCASTER: Had I been in town, you may be pretty sure you would have heard from me of the signal victories with which the Almighty had vouchsafed to bless our naval arms. I well know how your heart would expand on the intelligence. Would to God, my dear Muncaster, (I say it seriously and from the heart, not with levity, and therefore vainly,) that the nation in general, and especially that our great men and rulers, felt as you seem to have done on the occasion; that they had looked like you beyond second causes, and had seen the kind hand of the Almighty Disposer of all things, in the many, many deliverances our highly favored nation has experienced.

"I was delighted with Collingwood's general orders for a day of humiliation and thanksgiving. The latter I had heard of in the case of Lord Duncan's victory, and some others, but I do not remember to have ever heard of the mention of imploring pardon for sins, as well as returning thanks for blessings. The former pleased me particularly, for nothing can more magnify goodness than its being unmerited, and that, on the contrary, punishment has been rather deserved. But, my dear Muncaster, how abominable it is, that though, as we have recently learned, Lord Nelson and several others have ordered general thanksgivings on shipboard after victories, yet that these orders have never till now appeared in the Gazette; and consequently they have not been known, and have not produced their proper effect on the public mind."

He was now called to experience a trial by which he was much affected.

He was on a visit to Mr. Babington when he heard "the sad news of the armistice after the entire defeat of the Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz. God can preserve us—apparently we shall be in the most imminent danger." But the full evil of this blow he did not learn until after his return to town. "Jan. 21st. To London on Parliament's meeting. Heard sad account of Pitt, and opposition put off intended amendment." Austerlitz had struck a fatal blow at the health of this high-minded man, and a tie was about to be severed to which Mr. Wilberforce had owed much of the influence, and many of the difficulties, of his earlier years. "22d. Quite unsettled and uneasy about Pitt, so to town. Heard bad account. Called on various friends, and on Rose, who quite overcame. He had been long at Putney, talking to Bishop of Lincoln. Physicians said all was hopeless. Rose suggested to me about paying Pitt's debts, and even that I should make the motion. I thought, but I own on reflection, my judgment decidedly against it. Consulted Bankes. He likewise contra. 23d. Heard from Bishop of Lincoln that Pitt had died about half-past four in the morning. Deeply rather than pathetically affected by it. Pitt killed by the enemy as much as Nelson. Babington went to dine at Lord Teignmouth's, but I had no mind to go out."

*To Lord Muncaster.*

"BROOMFIELD, Jan. 25, 1806.

"MY DEAR MUNCASTER: \* \* \* There is something peculiarly affecting in the time and circumstances of poor Pitt's death. I own I have a thousand times

(ay, times without number) wished and hoped that a quiet interval would be afforded him, perhaps in the evening of life, in which he and I might confer freely on the most important of all subjects. But the scene is closed—forever.

“Of course what I am about to say is in strict confidence. I have heard, not without surprise, that his debts are considerable; a sum was named as large as £40,000 or £50,000. This must have been roguery, for he really has not for many years lived at a rate of more than £5000 or £6000 per annum. I do not say this lightly; and he has had an income since he got the Cinque Ports, of £10,000 per annum.

“To whom are the debts due? If to tradesmen, they ought to be paid; but might not debts to other sort of people, rich connections, etc., be suspected? and the very idea of the people’s paying these, is monstrous. I must say, however, that considering the number of affluent men connected with Pitt, some of whom have got great and lucrative places from him, I can not doubt but that, with perfect privacy and delicacy, a subscription might be made, adequate to the purpose.”

During the next week he was unceasingly employed “to get people to agree to a subscription to pay Pitt’s debts. Tried many, but cold in general, except Attorney-General, [Perceval,] who warm and generous as always.”

His plan was finally defeated by the motion about the debts in the House of Commons. The sum of £40,000 which was due to tradesmen, was discharged by the nation. Mr. Pitt’s private friends had raised £12,000

in the autumn of 1801, to relieve him from embarrassment; and one amongst them who owed the most to the friendship of the minister, was anxious that these claims should be added to the public grant. This degrading proposition was happily defeated; but not till Mr. Wilberforce had solemnly declared, that if the matter were proposed in Parliament, he would (being one of the creditors) give it his most earnest and persevering opposition. It is pleasing to turn from this conduct to that of Mr. Perceval, who, with a large family and moderate fortune, at once offered £1000 to the proposed subscription.

This is not the place for his matured estimate of his friend's character, but his letters written at the moment afford a lively picture of his first impressions. "Mr. Pitt had foibles, and of course they were not diminished by so long a continuance in office; but for a clear and comprehensive view of the most complicated subject in all its relations; for that fairness of mind which disposes a man to follow out, and when overtaken, to recognize the truth; for magnanimity, which made him ready to change his measures when he thought the good of the country required it, though he knew he should be charged with inconsistency on account of the change; for willingness to give a fair hearing to all that could be urged against his own opinions, and to listen to the suggestions of men, whose understandings he knew to be inferior to his own; for personal purity, disinterestedness, integrity, and love of his country, I have never known his equal." "His strictness in regard to truth, was astonishing, considering the situation he had so long filled."



*To Lady Waldegrave.*

"BROOMFIELD, *Feb.* 1, 1806.

"MY DEAR LADY W.: I was just about to take up the pen two days ago, when the account reached me of the melancholy event,\* which will naturally call forth still more painful feelings and more tender sensibilities in your mind. It is indeed very awful, and is sufficient to strike with seriousness the most inconsiderate hearts, that just at this moment, when our old national fabric is assailed so powerfully from without, the Almighty seems to be taking from us our main props within; whatever was most eminent for talents, and public spirit, and heroism—Nelson, Pitt, and Cornwallis, all gone together. Yet the same events have very different aspects. It is possible, (reasoning from the contents of the Holy Scriptures, whence alone we can derive our scanty knowledge of the divine principles of conduct,) it is possible, and I would hope, but I own with more than a counterbalancing of a contrary fear, that the Almighty may intend to show us our folly in trusting to an arm of flesh, and that He can deliver and protect us, when they are no more, in whom our ungrateful and irreligious nation has been used to repose its chief confidence.

"How do these events tend to illustrate the vanity of worldly greatness! Poor Pitt, I almost believe died of—a broken heart! for it is only due to him to declare that the love of his country burned in him with as ardent a flame as ever warmed the human bosom, and the accounts from the armies struck a death's blow within. A broken heart! What, was he like Otway,

\* The death of Lord Cornwallis.

or Collins, or Chatterton, who had not so much as a needful complement of food to sustain their bodies, while the consciousness of unrewarded talents, of mortified pride, pressed on them within, and ate out their very souls? Was he even like Suwaroff, another most useful example, basely deserted and driven into exile by the sovereign he had so long served? No, he was in the station, the highest in power and estimation in the whole kingdom—the favorite, I believe on the whole, both of King and people. Yes, this man who died of a broken heart was First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer. The time and circumstances of his death were peculiarly affecting, and I really believe, however incredulous you may be, that it dwelt on the minds of the people in London for—shall I say, as I was going to say, a whole week?—I never remember any event producing so much apparent feeling. But London soon returned to its gayety and giddiness, and all the world has been for many days busied about the inheritance, before the late possessor is laid in his grave. Poor fellow! It is an inexpressible satisfaction to me to be able to reflect, that I never gave him reason for a moment to believe that I had any object whatever of a worldly kind in view, in continuing my friendly connection.

“I have been interrupted, and must very unwillingly hasten to a conclusion. I had hoped to fill another sheet, and without unmeaning apologies for prolixity. Let me, however, add a few sentences. As to poor Pitt's death, I fear the account in the newspapers is not correct. But I have not been able to learn many particulars. Indeed, he spoke very little for some days before he died, and was extremely weakened and reduced on the Wednesday morning, when he was first

talked to as a dying man. He expired early on Thursday morning.

"Your Ladyship will conceive how this event has saddened my heart. Of Lord Cornwallis's death, I have not heard many particulars, and you will doubtless be fully and minutely informed. But I have learned from good authority, that the anxiety for the public good, and the earnestness in discharging the duties of his station, the forgetfulness of self, continued entire; and there were some remarkable proofs of it to the very last.

"I have been laboring with great diligence, but unsuccessfully, to get poor Pitt's debts (amounting in the whole to near £50,000) paid by the private contributions of his friends, connections, and admirers, rather than by the nation. I grieve lest the payment by a vote of Parliament, should be made a precedent, though most unfairly, for the payment of other debts; and lest, considering the heavy burdens lying and still to be laid on the country, there should by and by remain in the mind of the bulk of the community, an unpleasant feeling, which may have an effect on his memory, and associate with it an impression of a very undesirable kind. There are many who now join in the general cry, who will not hereafter be very tender of his credit.

"You are near the Mores; if you see them, give my kind remembrances, and do me the favor to say I would write, but that I am up to the chin in business. May God bless and support your heart, my dear Lady W., and cheer you under every trial; giving you in proportion to your temporal trials, a more than compensating taste of that peace which passeth all understanding, and that 'joy with which a stranger intermeddles not,' the peace and joy in believing through the power of

the Holy Ghost. Oh! blessed words: 'The rest that remaineth for the people of God.'

"I hope Lord W., and all your Ladyship's family, are well; always let me know of your and your family's going on, for a deep interest will always be taken in your happiness by,

"My dear Lady W.,

"Your Ladyship's faithful friend and servant,

"W. WILBERFORCE.

"I have not time to read over my scrawl."

## CHAPTER XXII.

THE death of Mr. Pitt dissolved the existing government, and the inheritance of his power was divided amongst the followers of Mr. Fox, Lord Grenville, Mr. Windham, and Lord Sidmouth. It was Mr. Wilberforce's general practice to support the King's government whenever he was able; and on this ground he now disclaimed at once all intentions of systematic opposition. He wished, too, as far as possible, to conciliate their support in the approaching Abolition struggle; and greatly to the annoyance of many of his friends, supported Lord Henry Petty in the contest for the representation of the University of Cambridge, which followed the death of Mr. Pitt.

Yet even to purchase support upon this question, he could not sacrifice his own independence. "Our great cause," he tells Mr. Gisborne, "has been considerably accredited by what has passed at the Cambridge election. Lord Henry Petty got a great deal of support, owing to his known zeal in it. His opponent, Lord Palmerston, lost much owing to his being supposed, mistakenly, I believe, to be our enemy; and numbers declared they would not, though satisfied in all other points, vote for an anti-abolitionist. So far well. The Chancellor of the Exchequer comes from Cambridge in a good state of mind quoad hoc. Fox a decided

friend. Grenville ditto. Lord Spencer I believe favorable, but not very strong. Lord Moira I doubt; Sidmouth, Ellenborough. Erskine talking friendly to me, but always absenting himself. Lord Fitzwilliam I am not quite sure, but I think favorable. Windham contra. But the great point would be to get, if possible, the royal family to give up their opposition. Stephen had a plan suggested by his warm zeal, that we should send a deputation to the new ministry, to make a sort of contract that we would befriend them as we did Pitt, that is, give them the turn of the scale, etc., if they would promise us to support the Abolition as a government measure. The idea is inadmissible, both on grounds of rectitude and policy, (the two parties would infallibly have different ideas of the practical extent of the obligation, and mutual misunderstanding would ensue,) yet I think we ought to contrive that the effect intended by it may be produced; and though I dare scarcely be sanguine when I recollect with whom we have to do, yet I can not but entertain some hopes that the wish to mollify, and even conciliate, a number of strange, impracticable, and otherwise *uncomeatable* fellows, by gratifying them in this particular, may have its weight; at least it will tend to counteract the fear of offending the West-Indians."

Upon these independent principles he acted, and was compelled to oppose one of the first measures of administration.

The leading members of the new Government understood his principles; and to his great joy entered heartily into his abolition views. "Consulting about abolition. Fox and Lord Henry Petty talked as if we might certainly carry our question in the House of Commons, but should certainly lose it in the House of

Lords. 'This looks but ill, as if they wished to please us, and yet not forfeit Prince of Wales' favor, and that of G. R., and other anti-abolitionists.' Notwithstanding these expressions, he never questioned the sincerity of Mr. Fox's attachment to his cause; and he learned afterwards with pleasure, that "the Prince had given his honor to Fox, not to stir adversely." After many conferences, in the following week, "with Lord Grenville, Lord Sidmouth, Fox, Lord Henry Petty, Stephen," he determined that a bill for the prohibition of the Foreign Slave Trade (which would fix the advantages gained in the last year) should precede his general measure. While this bill was passing through the Commons, a similar one was introduced into the House of Lords, where it was carried triumphantly on the 10th of May. "I saw our strength," says Lord Grenville, "and thought the occasion was favorable for launching out a little beyond what the measure itself actually required. I really think a foundation is laid for doing more and sooner than I have for a long time allowed myself to hope." Mr. Wilberforce rejoiced in this success. "Sunday, 18th. We have carried the Foreign Slave Bill, and we are now deliberating whether we shall push the main question. O Lord! do Thou guide us right, and enable me to maintain a spiritual mind amid all my hurry of worldly business, having my conversation in heaven."

He had intended to follow up this measure by the general bill, but after "meeting Fox at Lord Grenville's, and holding some anxious consultations with them, and also with" his "own friends about the expediency of proposing the general question this year; when it was almost decided to try," he "most reluctantly gave up the idea on Lord Grenville's sure opinion, that no chance

this session in the House of Lords ; the Bishops going out of town, etc. But we are to have a general resolution for Abolition both in Commons and Lords. How wonderful are the ways of God, and how are we taught to trust not in man, but in Him ! Though intimate with Pitt for all my life since earliest manhood, and he most warm for Abolition, and really honest ; yet now my whole human dependence is placed on Fox, to whom this life opposed, and on Grenville, to whom always rather hostile till of late years, when I heard he was more religious. O Lord ! Thou hast all hearts in Thy disposal : oh ! that it may be Thy will to put an end to this abhorred system."

The debate came on upon the 10th, when he moved an address, calling on the King to use his influence to obtain the coöperation of foreign powers ; " a measure which it obviously would not be so proper for any of the King's ministers to bring forward."

The resolutions, which were proposed by the leading ministers, declared the slave trade to be " contrary to the principles of justice, humanity, and sound policy ;" and that the House would, " with all practicable expediency," proceed to abolish it. " We carried our resolutions 100 and odd to 14, and my address without a division. If it please God to spare the health of Fox, and to keep him and Grenville together, I hope we shall next year see the termination of all our labors." Before the session closed, a bill was passed rapidly through both Houses to prevent the employment in the trade of any fresh ships.



## CHAPTER XXIII.

DURING all this time county business had pressed hard upon him. Some of the taxes proposed by the new government were most injurious to his mercantile constituents. A projected tax on unwrought iron, was that which the manufacturers of Yorkshire most condemned. This he was a principal instrument in defeating. "It pleased God," he says, "that I got a good deal of credit in the iron business, having made myself master of it." This attention to commercial matters, and still more his conduct in the woollen trade inquiry, were highly valued in his county, and produced no small effect in the elections which unexpectedly followed. The woollen trade inquiry involved "a very fatiguing parliamentary attendance." The committee on this subject "had sat above five weeks," upon the 25th of May, and "continued till within a few days of the rising of Parliament." During all which time he "never but one day was prevented from attending it."

After a long examination of witnesses, the Committee met to agree on their Report, "after wasting two or three mornings about it, reading it round a table—a sad way; they gave the preparation of it up to" him, "in a very confiding, but really very friendly manner." He "returned to Broomfield in the evening," intending at once to set about his task; but the following week was

crowded with engagements. Tuesday was "the House of Lords debate on Fox's Slave Trade Resolution. Most gratifying, Ellenborough especially; and Lord Erskine—though theatrical. Carried it, 42 to 21. Lord Sidmouth as usual." Wednesday morning he was attending a committee, and not home till late in the evening. On Thursday and Friday he was "in town all day, and both nights at the House on Windham's Training Bill. Sunday drilling discussed." This custom he successfully resisted, though he took to himself no credit for this triumph. "How wonderfully," are his reflections on it, "does God teach us to look to Him! In the Sunday drilling, the House of Commons against us, and Windham himself against us, yet by Windham's having admitted the clause, I hope we shall keep it in."

All this had interrupted the preparation of his Report on the Wool Duties. It was to be presented on the Monday, when he "put off the meeting of the Committee, thinking it would be better afterwards to have taken a day more, and done it well. And so it proved. Nobody asks afterwards how long it took, but how well done. Speaker complimented me much upon it. I carried it almost finished, to the Committee, and all of them delighted with it, and most pleasingly liberal and kind." It was a masterly composition; laying clearly down the true principles upon which the trade must be conducted; befriending the domestic clothier, whilst it freed the manufacturer from all needless and harassing restrictions.

But the state of Mr. Fox's health soon occupied all his attention. June 27th. "William Smith with us after the House, and talking of poor Fox constrainedly; when at last, overcome by his feelings, he burst out

with a real divulging of his danger—dropsy. Poor fellow, how melancholy his case! he has not one religious friend, or one who knows any thing about it. How wonderful God's providence! How poor a master the world! No sooner grasps his long-sought object than it shows itself a bubble, and he is forced to give it up." "I am much affected by his situation. In great danger apparently. Oh! that I might be the instrument of bringing him to the knowledge of Christ! I have entertained now and then a hope of it. God can do all things. His grace is infinite both in love and power. I quite love Fox for his generous and warm fidelity to the Slave Trade cause. Even very lately, when conscious that he would be forced to give up Parliament for the session, at least, he said, "he wished to go down to the House once more to say something on the slave trade."

The cause of abolition was now thought by men in general to be gained. Immediately after the Resolutions of June 24th, he was "congratulated" by a friend, the owner of a large West-India property, "on the abolition of the slave trade being carried, a work which you have had at your heart these twenty years. You will say I am superstitious, but I do not think I have ever done well in the world since I voted against it. Nothing has succeeded with me. I do not mean to say I am distressed, but my money has seemed so much dross, it turns to no account, or like sand is blown away. As you know my hand-writing, I will not put my name, and only add that I am, my dear W., very affectionately yours."

But he knew that the struggle was not yet over, and until it was, he would not rest. "I am sick of bustle, and long for quiet, but I will not leave the poor slaves

in the lurch." He found only a new motive for exertion in seeing that "the abolition looked more promising than for many years." No measure was omitted which the most watchful prudence could suggest. The London Committee, which had reassembled in 1804, after an interval of seven years, and again held itself ready to act "subject to the call of Mr. Wilberforce," met regularly this year at his house "in Palace Yard;" and he made arrangements in various quarters for providing the evidence which the House of Lords might possibly require.

Nor were his labors over, when leaving the neighborhood of London towards the end of August, he "slipped into the snug and retired harbor of Lyme, for the purpose of careening and refitting." He had long designed writing an address upon the Slave Trade, and he now set resolutely to this task. "What was once known on that subject is now almost forgotten, and so many new members have come into Parliament, that even for their sakes it is desirable to state what we do really hold." "Esteeming it also as one of the greatest honors of my life. . the greatest political honor. . that I have been called forth by Providence to be the advocate in this great cause, I think I ought to leave behind me some authentic record of the real nature and amount of the question." He had long postponed this work, that it might come out just before the subject was debated in the House of Lords.

Here he was soon followed by the account of Mr. Fox's death. "So poor Fox is gone at last. I am more affected by it than I thought I should be." "How speedily has he followed his great rival! Thurlow too gone. Independently of all other considerations, there is something which comes home to a man in the gradual

quitting of the stage of those who are parts of the same dramatic personæ as himself. Even I seem to myself to be reminded that I am verging towards the close of the piece." "Well may we also be ready."

In the midst of quiet home occupations, he was "shocked by a letter from Lord Grenville, announcing a dissolution of Parliament." "Sadly unsettled by the news."

This, of course, involved him in the excitement of an election, and he was informed that some opposition was likely.

It was indeed earnestly contested, and the diary of his proceedings during the canvass, which occupied him a fortnight, proves not only the zeal of his opponents, but the steady support of his friends, some of whom had been somewhat alienated by the course he had taken in the Committee of the House of Commons, on the woollen trade, which has already been referred to, in which he had attempted to mediate between the smaller and larger manufacturers, whose interests in the question were antagonistic. He was, however, triumphantly returned. After the election he paid a few visits to friends omitted during the canvass, and before the beginning of December was again settled in his house at Broomfield. To a friend he writes :

"MY DEAR SIR: I hope you would suggest to yourself as a plea for my silence, when I ought to have answered one or two very friendly and most interesting letters which I received from you, that a contested election for Yorkshire finds a candidate in pretty abundant employment for both tongue, legs, and pen. I have great reason to be thankful for the kindness with which I was received. Indeed I can only ascribe it to that

gracious Providence which can control at will the affections of men. I never took pains, though feeling the deepest sense of my constituents' kindness, to cultivate an interest; nay, more, I have been very deficient in personal attentions, owing to my health requiring me to live as quietly and regularly as I can, during the recess from Parliament. I never attended races or even assizes, which members for Yorkshire before me used to do, and yet I have been elected five times, and never with more unanimity than the last. It really shows that there is some public spirit amongst us; and that if a member of Parliament will act an honest and independent part, his constituents (such at least of them as are themselves independent) will not desert him."

As soon as he returned home he "renewed his Slave Trade pamphlet," and continued hard at work upon it; quitting it only to engage in the necessary preparations for the approaching campaign.

He continued intent upon his work till near the end of January. At length, on the 27th, he made "a great effort to finish the book; which I did about six o'clock, and sent it to London, and it is to be out on the 31st, by dint of extreme exertion, and sent to the Lords."

He had expected much from the critical appearance of this book; and he was not disappointed. "Its beneficial effect" writes Mr. Roscoe, "could not escape the observation of any one who attended the discussion in the Lords." Its effect was greatly strengthened by its mild and generous temper towards the defenders of the system. "In admiring your triumph," writes Mr. Hayley, "I also admire the lenity with which you adorn it. You treat your opponents with the mild

magnanimity of a British admiral, who when the thunder of his cannon has reduced the ships of his enemies, exerts his fortitude and skill to rescue them from utter perdition."

The following extract from a letter to the Freeholders of Yorkshire, exhibits most forcibly his views on the subject of the certainty with which national punishments follow national crimes. How different is such an address from the violent party spirit which generally marks the character of such documents! "It is often rather in the way of a gradual decline," he says, "than of violent and sudden shocks, that national crimes are punished. I must frankly therefore confess to you that in the case of my country's prosperity or decline, my hopes and fears are not the sport of every passing rumor; nor do they rise or fall materially, according to the successive reports we may receive of the defeats or victories of Bonaparte. But he who has looked with any care into the page of history, will acknowledge that when nations are prepared for their fall, human instruments will not be wanting to effect it: and lest man, vain man, so apt to overrate the powers and achievements of human agents, should ascribe the subjugation of the Romans to the consummate policy and powers of a Julius Cæsar, their slavery shall be completed by the unwarlike Augustus, and shall remain entire under the hateful tyranny of Tiberius, and throughout all the varieties of their successive masters. Thus it is, that most commonly by the operation of natural causes, and in the way of natural consequences, Providence governs the world. But if we are not blind to the course of human events, as well as utterly deaf to the plain instructions of revelation, we must believe that a continued course of wickedness, oppression, and cruelty,

obstinately maintained in spite of the fullest knowledge and the loudest warnings, must infallibly bring down upon us the heaviest judgments of the Almighty. We may ascribe our fall to weak councils or unskillful generals; to a factious and over-burdened people; to storms which waste our fleets; to diseases which thin our armies; to mutiny among our soldiers and sailors, which may even turn against us our own force; to the diminution of our revenues, and the excessive increase of our debt: men may complain on one side of a venal ministry, on the other of a factious opposition; while amid mutual recriminations, the nation is gradually verging to its fate. Providence will easily find means for the accomplishment of its own purposes."

As soon as his book was out he was again engaged in action. The approaching debate called for every exertion. "Grenville told me yesterday he could not count more than fifty-six, yet had taken pains, written letters, etc. The Princes canvassing against us, alas!" It seemed clear that he would have no easy triumph. Two Cabinet ministers never withdrew their opposition, and the Dukes of Clarence and of Sussex declared openly against the Bill, speaking, as it was understood, the sentiments of all the reigning family. Yet the ice of prejudice was rapidly dissolving; and when he visited Lord Grenville on the morning of the debate, "he went over the list of peers, and was sanguine, counting on above seventy in all" The same evening came the crisis of the struggle. "House of Lords, Abolition Bill till five in the morning, when carried, 72 and 28 proxies to 28 and 6 proxies."

He had learned from frequent disappointments to look at the promise of success with a calm and tempered joy; but more from excess of anxiety than any



exact apprehensions of danger. "I receive congratulations from all, as if all done. Yet I can not be sure. May it please God to give us success." And on the day before the second reading, he makes the following entry in his diary: Never surely had I more cause for gratitude than now, when carrying the great object of my life, to which a gracious Providence directed my thoughts twenty-six or twenty-seven years ago, and led my endeavors in 1787 or 1788. O Lord ! let me praise Thee with my whole heart : for never surely was there any one so deeply indebted as myself; which way soever I look I am crowded with blessings. Oh ! may my gratitude be in some degree proportionate."

It was in this spirit that he entered the House upon the 23d of February, 1807. "Busy for Lord Howick in the morning. Friends dined before House. Slave Trade debate. Lord Howick opened—embarrassed and not at ease, but argued ably. Astonishing eagerness of House; six or eight starting up to speak at once, young noblemen, etc., and asserting high principles of rectitude. Solicitor-General (Sir Samuel Romilly) excellent; and at length contrasted my feelings, returning to my private roof, and receiving the congratulations of my friends, and laying my head on my pillow, etc., with Bonaparte's, encircled with kings his relatives. It quite overcame me." The House was little less affected by Sir Samuel Romilly's address. When he entreated the young members of Parliament to let this day's event be a lesson to them, how much the rewards of virtue exceeded those of ambition; and then contrasted the feelings of the Emperor of the French in all his greatness with those of that honored individual, who would this day lay his head upon his pillow and remember that the Slave Trade was no more; the whole House,

surprised into a forgetfulness of its ordinary habits, burst forth into acclamations of applause. They had seen the unwearied assiduity with which, during twenty years, he had vainly exhausted all the expedients of wisdom; and when they saw him entering with a prosperous gale the port whither he had been so often driven, they welcomed him with applause "such as was scarcely ever before given," says Bishop Porteus, "to any man sitting in his place in either House of Parliament." So full was his heart of its own deep thoughts of thankfulness that he scarcely noticed these unusual honors. "Is it true," Mr. Hey asked him, "that the House gave you three cheers upon the conclusion of the Solicitor-General's speech? And if so, was not this an unprecedented effusion of approbation?" "To the questions you ask me," he replies, "I can only say that I was myself so completely overpowered by my feelings, when he touched so beautifully on my domestic reception, (which had been precisely realized a few evenings before, on my return from the House of Lords,) that I was insensible to all that was passing around me."

The debate proceeded with little show of opposition, except from one West-Indian planter, who gave him an opportunity of replying in a speech "distinguished for splendor of eloquence and force of argument;"\* and then came the cheering issue. "At length divided, 283 to 16. A good many came over to Palace Yard after House up, and congratulated me. John Thornton and Heber, Sharpe, Macaulay, Grant, and Robert Grant, Robert Bird, and William Smith, who in the gallery." It was a triumphant meeting. "Well, Henry," Mr. Wilberforce asked playfully of Mr. Thorn-

\* *Ann. Register.*

ton, "what shall we abolish next?" "The lottery, I think," gravely replied his sterner friend. "Let us make out the names of these sixteen miscreants; I have four of them," said William Smith. Mr. Wilberforce, kneeling, as was his wont, upon one knee at the crowded table, looked up hastily from the note which he was writing—"Never mind the miserable 16, let us think of our glorious 283." This was Reginald Heber's first introduction to Mr. Wilberforce. Heber had entered the room with a strong suspicion of his principles, but he left it saying to his friend John Thornton: "How an hour's conversation can dissolve the prejudice of years!" Perhaps his witnessing this night the Christian hero in his triumph after the toil of years, may have been one step towards his gaining afterwards the martyr crown at Trichinopoly.

The next day was appointed for a public fast. "I was forced to write to the Duke of Gloucester, from whom, as also from Lord Grenville, most kind and pious letters of congratulation. Then St. Margaret's Church. Returning, talked with Stephen on Slave Trade Abolition Bill. Then Lord Howick sent for me about clauses, and not back till late."

For some weeks he continued "very much occupied, making other matters bend to the Abolition." But on one important occasion of a different kind he took an active part, opposing the increased grant which ministers designed to give to the Roman Catholic College at Maynooth. Popery, he was convinced, was the true bane of Ireland, and he deemed it nothing less than infatuation to take any steps for its encouragement. This opinion he fearlessly asserted. "I am not," he said, "one of those men who entertain the large and liberal views on religious subjects, insisted on with so much

energy by the honorable gentleman on the other side ; I am not so much like a certain ruler, of whom it has upon a late occasion been so happily said, that he was an honorary member of all religions."

And now his labors were indeed completed. Congratulations poured in upon him from every quarter. "To speak," wrote Sir James Mackintosh, from the other Indies, "of fame and glory to Mr. Wilberforce, would be to use a language far beneath him ; but he will surely consider the effect of his triumph on the fruitfulness of his example. Who knows whether the greater part of the benefit that he has conferred on the world, (the greatest that any individual has had the means of conferring,) may not be the encouraging example that the exertions of virtue may be crowned by such splendid success? We are apt petulantly to express our wonder that so much exertion should be necessary to suppress such flagrant injustice. The more just reflection will be, that a short period of the short life of one man is, well and wisely directed, sufficient to remedy the miseries of millions for ages. Benevolence has hitherto been too often disheartened by frequent failures ; hundreds and thousands will be animated by Mr. Wilberforce's example, by his success, and (let me use the word only in the moral sense of preserving his example) by a renown that can only perish with the world, to attack all the forms of corruption and cruelty that scourge mankind. Oh ! what twenty years in the life of one man those were, which abolished the Slave Trade ! How precious is time ! How valuable and dignified is human life, which in general appears so base and miserable ! How noble and sacred is human nature, made capable of achieving such truly great exploits !"

For himself, all selfish triumph was lost in unfeigned gratitude to God. "I have indeed inexpressible reasons for thankfulness on the glorious result of that struggle which, with so many eminent fellow-laborers, I have so long maintained. I really can not account for the fervor which happily has taken the place of that fastidious, well-bred lukewarmness which used to display itself on this subject, except by supposing it to be produced by that almighty power which can influence at will the judgment and affections of men."

"Oh! what thanks do I owe the Giver of all good, for bringing me, in His gracious providence, to this great cause, which at length, after almost nineteen years' labor, is successful!"

## CHAPTER XXIV.

THE change in the ministry which took place just at this juncture, and which had nearly proved fatal to his wishes even at the very moment when he was most confident of success, was full of interest to him on other grounds.

He was bound by his general principles to support the new ministry. "It is in one grand particular the same question as in 1784. My then principles, to which I still adhere, would govern my vote, even if I did not think so favorably of their leader, Perceval, as I do." But this he could not do without the appearance of ingratitude towards those who had assisted him so warmly in the Abolition struggle. Even to appear ungrateful gave him no little pain; but the law of duty was absolute, and he obeyed it strictly, finding only a new proof that "politics are a most unthankful business." "The debt of gratitude," he told his constituents, "which is due to the late ministry from myself, I shall ever be ready to acknowledge, and by all legitimate methods to repay; but I have no right to recompense their services by my parliamentary support. That is not mine to give or withhold at pleasure."

"My situation and feelings," he told Mr. Wrangham, as early as the 24th of March, "are very embarrassing, from the conflicting considerations and emotions which

come into play. On the one hand, Lord Grenville, Howick, and Henry Petty have acted most zealously and honorably in the business of Abolition, and the success of that great measure, (for, blessed be God, we may now say it has succeeded, though in form the Bill has two stages more to pass through,) is, under a gracious Providence, to be ascribed to their hearty efforts. Yet, on the other hand, I feel deeply impressed with a sense of the importance of not embarking on a Roman Catholic bottom, (if I may so term it,) the interest and well-being of our Protestant empire."

On this ground he had boldly resisted the ministerial grant for enlarging the College of Maynooth, even when the tardy success of twenty years of labor seemed to be endangered by such honest opposition. No efforts were spared to gain him over; but there was a simplicity of view in all his public conduct, which made such attempts absolutely powerless.

In the midst of anticipations of a difficult and laborious session he "was astonished by a letter from Perceval announcing a dissolution of Parliament." This was most unwelcome intelligence. The angry feelings which had cost Mr. Lascelles his election in the last year were by no means allayed; and party spirit had been stirred to an unwonted pitch by late public events. He learned at once that his old colleague would again take the field; that Mr. Fawkes, though a man of large fortune, shrunk from the expenses of a contest; and that Lord Milton came forward in his place. No one could foresee the result of such a collision. In their calmer hours indeed all moderate men might think their own victory dearly purchased by the loss of their independent representative; but such feelings would be forgotten in the delirium of the conflict: while it is more than

probable that the leaders in the strife would view with no great dissatisfaction a result which would share again between their families the representation of the county. Whatever was its issue, the contest must be ruinous to any man of ordinary fortune. "Lord Harewood" was "ready to spend in it his whole Barbadoes property," and Wentworth House was not less threatening in its preparations. Mr. Wilberforce's fortune would stand no such demands; "and the plan of a subscription," said a leading politician in an adjoining county, "may answer very well in a borough, but it is hopeless where things must be conducted upon such a scale as in the county of York." Many of his friends dissuaded him from entering on the contest; but the moral importance which he attached to it, determined him to venture the attempt, and after sending, on the 25th of April, expresses to Leeds and other places," and hearing on the 27th "the King's speech read by the Speaker round the table to standers-by . . . recommendation of union caught at by opposition" . . . he set himself off for York.

He left London upon the 28th, after "a narrow escape from breaking my leg" (an accident which would have been fatal to his hopes,) "just when setting out—*Deo gratias*—how are we always in His hands!" Upon the 29th he entered Yorkshire, and was immediately engaged in the full bustle of the contest.

A meeting of his friends had been held on the preceding day at York: but whilst "Mr. Lascelles and Lord Milton had already engaged canvassing agents, houses of entertainment, and every species of conveyance in every considerable town," six important days elapsed before any number of his friends could be brought together. At length, upon the 4th of May, his



principal supporters met at York, and agreed to establish local committees throughout every district, in the hope that voluntary zeal would supply the place of regular canvassing agents. Meanwhile he himself set out upon a hasty canvass of the West Riding, and traversed all its more populous parts with his usual rapidity and success. "Time was," as he said the year before, "when I did not dislike such scenes;" but he had now reached a calmer age, and "sickened at a contest." In the tumult of popular applause, which waited on his canvass, "I look forward," he tells Mr. Hey, "with pleasure to the prospect of a quiet Sunday with you, and rejoice that half the week is gone by; yet I am daily, hourly experiencing the never-failing mercies of Heaven." "I have often told you," he writes from Mr. Hey's to Mrs. Wilberforce, "that I never enjoy this blessed day so much as during a time of peculiar bustle and turmoil. It seems as if God graciously vouchsafed a present reward for our giving up to Him a liberal measure of that time and attention, which worldly men would deem necessary to the success of their worldly plans."

The nomination came on at York upon the 13th, and nearly every hand was held up in his favor. So far all was promising; but how the expenses of the approaching contest could be safely met, was a most serious question. The nomination was followed by a meeting of his friends, at which this subject was brought forward. He at once "declared, with manly firmness, that he never would expose himself to the imputation of endeavoring to make a seat in the House of Commons subservient to the repair of a dilapidated fortune."\*

\* *Annual Register.*

He claimed therefore the promises of support which had been liberally made, and called upon the county to assert its independence. Those who were present on that day, can still remember the effect produced by his appeal; and it was replied to nobly. "It is impossible," said a gentleman, who rose as soon as he sat down, "that we can desert Mr. Wilberforce, and therefore put down my name for £500." This example spread; about £18,000 was immediately subscribed; and it was resolved that his cause was a county object, and that he should not even be permitted to put down his name to the subscriptions opened to support his election.

The next day he set off to spend the few days which preceded the election in a canvass of the East Riding. On reaching Hull he was met by a great body of freeholders at the hall at Sculcoates; "and when standing up to address them, it seemed," says an eye-witness, "as if he was struck by the scene before him—the fields and gardens where he had played as a boy now converted into wharfs or occupied by buildings; and pouring forth the thoughts with which the change impressed him—the gradual alteration of external objects, and the still greater alteration which had taken place in themselves—he addressed the people with the most thrilling effect."

The next day was Sunday, and he was able to "bless God that his mind was pretty free from politics." "I walked with him," says the Rev. Dr. Dykes, "for a considerable time. We called upon various friends, and I was much struck to see how totally he had dismissed from his mind all thoughts of the approaching contest. His conversation related entirely to subjects which suited the day. He was speaking particularly

about the words, 'being made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light,' and seemed free from any sort of care about what was coming."

He returned to York on the day of election, (Wednesday, May 20th,) and here things assumed an unexpected aspect. The show of hands was against him; and on that day he was second, the next lowest, on the poll. This was in part owing to the want of conveyances, and to the impossibility of giving to volunteer supporters the order and arrangement of professional agents. Appearances were so unfavorable, that when his friends met at dinner after the conclusion of the poll—"I can see, gentlemen, clearly enough how this will turn out," said the barrister who had come from London as his professional adviser; "Mr. Wilberforce has obviously no chance, and the sooner he resigns the better." But if the combinations of regular discipline were more prompt in their effect, the vast muster of independent freeholders on the third day proved them to be no match for the voluntary zeal to which he trusted. "No carriages are to be procured," says a letter from Hull, "but boats are proceeding up the river heavily laden with voters: farmers lend their wagons; even donkeys have the honor of carrying voters for Wilberforce, and hundreds are proceeding on foot. This is just as it should be. No money can convey all the voters; but if their feelings are roused, his election is secure."

"My having been left behind on the poll," he writes to Mrs. Wilberforce on the evening of Friday, "seemed to rouse the zeal of my friends, (I should rather say, of my fervent adherents,) they exerted themselves and have mended my condition. You would be gratified to see the affection which is borne me by many to whom

I am scarcely or not at all known. Even those who do not vote for me seem to give me their esteem. I am thankful for the weather," (the preceding days had been rainy and boisterous,) "and indeed I am thankful for a quiet mind, which is placed above the storm."

How completely this was the case, may be better shown by the following letter to Mrs. Wilberforce :

"YORK, *Sunday night, May 24.*

"I am robbed of the time I meant to spend in writing to you, at least of a great part of it; but you will be glad to hear that I have spent on the whole a very pleasant Sunday, though this evening is of necessity passed in my committee-room. I have been twice at the Minster, where the sublimity of the whole scene once nearly overcame me. It is the largest and finest Gothic building probably in the world. The city is full of freeholders, who came in such numbers as to cover the whole area of the place (a very large one) where the service is performed, and every seat and pew were filled. I was exactly reminded of the great Jewish Passover in the Temple, in the reign of Josiah. It is gratifying to say that there was the utmost decency, and not the smallest noise or indecorum; no cockades or distinctive marks. Indeed, I must say, the town is wonderfully quiet, considering it is an election time. I am now writing in a front room, and I sat in one for two hours last night, and there was not the smallest noise or disturbance; no more, I declare, than in any common town at ordinary times.

"How beautiful Broomfield must be at this moment! Even here the lilacs and hawthorn are in bloom in warm situations. I imagine myself roaming through

the shrubbery with you and the little ones ; and indeed I have joined you in spirit several times to-day, and have hoped we were applying together at the throne of grace. How merciful and gracious God is to me ! Surely the universal kindness which I experience, is to be regarded as a singular instance of the goodness of the Almighty. Indeed no one has so much cause to adopt the declaration, that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days. I bless God my mind is calm and serene, and I can leave the event to Him without anxiety, desiring that in whatever state I may be placed, I may adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour, and do honor to my Christian profession. But all is uncertain, at least to any human eye. I must say, Good night. May God bless you. Kiss the babes, and give friendly remembrances to all family and other friends. If it has been as hot to-day with you as with us, (the wind east, thermometer 77, in the shade, about twelve,) you must have suffered greatly. Every blessing attend you and ours in time and eternity."

After the first few days, it was only by great skill in managing a most unruly audience, that he could ever gain a hearing. "While Wilberforce was speaking the other day," writes Mr. Thornton, "the mob of Milton interrupted him: he was attempting to explain a point which had been misrepresented; he endeavored to be heard again and again, but the cry against him always revived. 'Print, print,' cried a friend of Wilberforce in the crowd, 'print what you have to say in a hand-bill, and let them read it, since they will not hear you.' 'They read indeed!' cried Wilberforce; 'what! do you suppose that men who make such a noise as those fellows, can read?' holding up both his hands;

'no men that make such noises as those can read, I'll promise you. They must hear me now, or they'll know nothing about the matter.' Immediately there was a fine Yorkshire grin over some thousand friendly faces."

The poll was kept open for fifteen days, and until the twelfth he was daily in the full turmoil of this noisy scene. "Breakfasted daily at the tavern—cold meat at two—addressed the people at half-past five or six—at half-past six dined, forty or fifty, and sat with them. Latterly the people would not hear me, and shameful treatment. On Sundays allowed to be very quiet, to dine alone, and go twice to church." His temper of mind in the midst of this confusion was such as is rarely preserved in the rude shock of such a contest. "It was necessary," says Mr. Russel, one of his most active and friendly agents, "that I should have some private communication with him every day. I usually put myself in his way therefore when he came in from the hustings to dress for dinner. On each day as he entered I perceived that he was repeating to himself what seemed the same words: at length I was able to catch them, and they proved to be that stanza of Cowper's:

" 'The calm retreat, the silent shade,  
With prayer and praise agree,  
And seem by Thy sweet bounty made  
For those that follow Thee.' "

Upon the twelfth day of the contest his active labors were suspended by a violent attack of epidemic disorder, which confined him to his room during the four days it still lasted. But though to all the other rumors that of his being dead was added, his victory was now secure. From the third day he continued to head the

poll, and the final numbers, as declared by the High Sheriff, were for Wilberforce, 11,806, Milton, 11,177, Lascelles, 10,989.

Every nerve had been strained by the two great parties which were opposed to him. "Nothing since the days of the revolution," says the *York Herald*, "has ever presented to the world such a scene as this great county for fifteen days and nights. Repose or rest have been unknown in it, except it was seen in a messenger asleep upon his post-horse or in his carriage. Every day the roads in every direction to and from every remote corner of the county have been covered with vehicles loaded with voters; barouches, curricles, gigs, flying wagons, and military cars with eight horses, crowded sometimes with forty voters, have been scouring the country, leaving not the slightest chance for the quiet traveller to urge his humble journey, or find a chair at an inn to sit down upon."

The mode in which the expenses of his contest were defrayed was not less remarkable than the fact of his success. When it had lasted little more than a week, £64,455 had been subscribed; and much of it from places with which he had neither political nor personal connection. Contributions poured in unasked from London, Edinburgh, Birmingham, Colchester, Leicester, and many other towns. "My exertions," wrote the Rev. Thomas Robinson of Leicester, "for you in the last election proceeded not from the partiality of friendship, but from a strong sense of duty. With contested elections in this place I never interfere; but yours was an excepted case; and from your parliamentary conduct you had an irresistible claim for support, not only upon the county of York, but upon the kingdom at large." "Here are the first characters of whom the

metropolis of the world can boast," said one of the West Riding addresses, "stepping forward not merely with their good wishes, but with their purses and their hearts opened. For a long series of years they have witnessed the parliamentary career of our invaluable friend—his manly eloquence, his astonishing activity, his undaunted perseverance, his unexampled disinterestedness—and shall Yorkshiremen maintain a cold indifference towards him?" The answer of his own county to this appeal was one gratifying feature in his triumph. So great were the numbers who insisted upon coming at their own charges, that whilst the joint expenses of his two opponents amounted to £200,000, the whole charge of bringing to the poll his great majority was but £28,600. Forty-six per cent was returned upon the Yorkshire subscriptions. Those of the south consisted of two sums of £10,500; one provisional, which was returned entire; and the other absolute, of which one half only was employed. "Never," says Mr. Wilberforce, "shall I forget the spontaneous zeal with which numbers of all ranks came forward, subjecting themselves often to great trouble and fatigue, coming from considerable distances at their own expense, with other gratifying marks of attachment and esteem."

Some of these instances are worthy of record. A freeholder presented himself to vote whose appearance seemed to imply that the cost of his journey must be an inconvenient burden to him. The committee therefore proposed to him that they should defray his expenses. This he instantly declined. When, however, it appeared that he was a clergyman of very small means, who had travelled (and often on foot) from the farthest corner of the county, they renewed the same suggestion; and named a certain sum, which they pressed him



to accept. "Well, gentlemen," he said at last, "I will accept your offer, and I request you to add that sum in my name to the subscription for Mr. Wilberforce's expenses."

"How did you come up?" they asked an honest countryman from the neighborhood of Rotherham, who had given Mr. Wilberforce a plumper, and denied having spent any thing on his journey. "Sure enow I cam all'd-way ahint Lord Milton's carriage."

"Perhaps it may be thought," says Mr. Wilberforce in the letter which after the election he addressed to the freeholders, "that we too much neglected pride, and pomp, and circumstance; the procession, and the music, and the streamers, and all the other purchased decorations which catch the vulgar eye. That our more sober system was recommended to me by economical motives, I will not deny. This economy may perhaps by some be thought to be carried too far; yet when it is recollected that it was not my money, but that of my kind and public-spirited supporters, which was expended, no liberal mind will wonder at my having earnestly wished to be parsimonious. But shall I confess for my friends as well as for myself, that we acted from the impulse of our taste, no less than from that of our judgment, when we declined all competition in parade and profusion? Our triumph was of a different sort. We may perhaps have too much indulged our love of simplicity; but to our eyes and feelings, the entrance of a set of common freeholders on their own, and those often not the best horses, or riding in their carts and wagons, often equipped in a style of rustic plainness, was far more gratifying than the best-arranged and most pompous cavalcade."

It is interesting to trace the secret safe-guards which

kept his simplicity of mind untainted amidst such success and flattery. "Surely," are his private reflections, "it calls for deep humiliation and warm acknowledgment, that God has given me favor with men, that after guiding me by His providence to that great cause, He crowned my efforts with success, and obtained for me so much good-will and credit. Alas! Thou knowest, Lord, all my failings, errors, infirmities, and negligences in relation to this great cause; but Thou art all goodness and forbearance towards me. If I do not feel grateful to Thee, oh! how guilty must I be brought in by my own judgment. But O Lord! I have found too fatally my own stupidity; do Thou take charge of me, and tune my heart to sing Thy praises, and make me wholly Thine." "When I look back on my parliamentary life, and see how little, all taken together, I have duly adorned the doctrine of God my Saviour, I am ashamed and humbled in the dust; may any time which remains, Lord, be better employed! Meanwhile I come to the cross with all my sins, negligences, and ignorances, and cast myself on the free mercy of God in Christ, as my only hope and refuge. Lord, receive and pardon me, and give me Thy renewing grace. Oh! how inexpressibly valuable are the promises of Holy Scripture! Thy ways, O Lord! are not as our ways; Thou art infinite in love as in wisdom, and in power. Oh! may I never forsake Thee! guide me, guard me, purify me, strengthen me, keep me from falling, and at length present me faultless before the presence of Thy glory with exceeding joy."

"There is something so stupendously great in the salvation of God, that when we are enabled to have some realizing sense of it, one is ready to cry out, 'Not unto me, O Lord! not unto me; surely I am utterly

unworthy of all Thy goodness and love. So thou art, but Christ is worthy ; and He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied. And all the company of the redeemed, with the holy angels, and surely with myriads of myriads of beings, according to their several ranks, and orders, and faculties, and powers, shall join in adoring the infinite love of the Redeemer, and shall make up the chorus of that heavenly song, 'Worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive honor, and glory, and blessing,' etc. Oh ! may I bear a part in that bright and glad assemblage ! Who will, who among them all can have more cause than myself for gratitude and love ? Meanwhile, may I prove my gratitude on earth, by giving up myself to Thy service, and living universally to Thy glory. O Lord ! enable me to be thus wholly Thine."

"O Lord ! I humbly hope that it is Thou who knockest at the door of my heart, who callest forth these more than usually lively emotions of contrition, desire, faith, trust, and gratitude. Oh ! may I hear His voice, and open the door and let Him in, and be admitted to intercourse and fellowship ; may I be really a thriving Christian, bringing forth abundantly the fruits of the Spirit to the glory of God. O Lord ! I am lost in astonishment at Thy mercy and love. That Thou shouldst not only quit the glory and happiness of heaven to be made man, and bear the most excruciating torments and bitter degradation for our deliverance and salvation, but that Thou still bearest with us, though we, knowing all Thy goodness, are still cold and insensible to it. That Thou strivest with our perverseness, conquerest our opposition, and still waitest to be gracious ; and that it was in the foreknowledge of this our base ingratitude and stupid per-

verseness, that Thou didst perform these miracles of mercy. That Thou knewest me and my hardness, and coldness, and unworthy return for all Thy goodness, when Thou calledst me from the giddy throng, and shone into my heart with the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jesus Christ. Oh! well may we exclaim: 'Thy ways are not as our ways, nor Thy thoughts as our thoughts; but as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Thy ways higher than our ways, and thy thoughts than our thoughts.' O Lord! I cast myself before Thee, oh! spurn me not from Thee! unworthy though I am, of all Thy wonderful goodness . . . Oh! grant me more and more of humility, and love, and faith, and hope, and longing for a complete renewal into Thine image! Lord, help me, and hear me. I come to Thee as my only Saviour. Oh! be Thou my help, my strength, my peace, and joy, and consolation! my Alpha and Omega; my all in all. Amen."

"I have far too little thought of the dangers of great wealth, or rather of such affluence and rank in life as mine. O my soul! bethink thee of it; and at the same time bless God who has given thee some little knowledge of the way of salvation. How little also have I borne in mind that we are to be pilgrims and strangers on the earth! This impression can be kept up in those who are in such a state of prosperity and comfort as myself, by much prayer and meditation, and by striving habitually to walk by faith and to have my conversation in heaven." "O Lord! direct me to some new line of usefulness, for Thy glory, and the good of my fellow-creatures. I have been thinking of lessening the number of oaths."

The new Parliament met in June, and continued its session till August, during which time he gave as usual

undivided attention to the duties of his position as member of the House of Commons, and even at Brighton, to which he repaired with his family on the adjournment, he found but little leisure, being "engaged for five or six solid hours daily on letters alone," while the occupation of his remaining hours may be inferred from his own notice. "Paley's Natural Theology, Adam Smith, popular pamphlets, Bosanquet's Value of Commerce—clever, but rash, and in parts unfair, but not designedly: a man should always have a friend to run over his writings. Cobbett, too, and Edinburgh Review, and Eclectic; Mrs. Hutchinson's Memoirs of Col. H., beautiful. Spence against Foreign Commerce—sad stuff, a vile minglemangle of blundering conclusions from Adam Smith, Economists, etc. Lowe, on State of West-Indies—oil without vinegar; Concessions to America the bane of Great Britain; excellent critique on Malthus, in *Christian Observer*, which Bowdler's, I am sure; Lay of Last Minstrel—a little poetry sometimes walking out, but almost always I read out of doors. Looking over East-India documents for civilizing and converting natives; Buchanan's Ecclesiastical Establishment, and Wrangham's Civilization of Hindoos." Such, with the general progress of public affairs, were the subjects which engrossed his mind and feelings even during the hours of respite from actual service. In the autumn he returned to Broomfield, where his house was the resort of young men whose character has since proved the influence there exerted upon it, while foreigners either sought pleasure in his society, or manifested their respect for his principles and actions, by calling on him.

In the middle of December he had a sudden attack of dangerous illness. "Dec. 20th. A good deal of pain

in my side, and my breath much affected. 22d. Pitcairne called and bled me—thought the complaint very serious—inflammation on the lungs—the last I should have feared. How are we reminded of our continual dependence upon God! 23d. Better, I thank God, but still in a ticklish state. 25th. Surprisingly recovered, I thank God.” This amendment continued without any check; and upon the first day of the new year, he acknowledges “the great mercies I have received of the Lord. How good has God been to me in recovering me so rapidly from a very dangerous disease, and during the course of it, preserving me from any great suffering, and giving me every possible help and comfort! My dear kind friend the Dean, came up to us. My servant very obliging. Pitcairne very kind and attentive, and my dearest wife all tenderness and assiduity. I was taken ill on the 18th of December, and though not yet down-stairs, I am almost myself again. O Lord! bless to me this dispensation! Cause me to live in a more practical sense of the shortness and uncertainty of all human things; and oh! bring my soul more effectually than ever hitherto, to God in Christ, and give me a large measure of Thy Spirit. May I be enabled to live by faith above the world, looking for a better country, with my heart supremely set on it. O Lord! I know too well my own weakness, but Thou canst strengthen the weakest, and hast promised that Thou wilt, if we earnestly pray to Thee. Lord, be with me, and strengthen me. Enable me to maintain a closer walk with Thee; and while I live a life of faith and hope, having my affections set on things above, may I discharge the duties of my station, so as to let my light shine before men, and adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things. Amen, and Amen.”

Amongst the memoranda of a day "set apart" shortly afterwards, the meeting of Parliament being at hand, "for prayer and meditation, and other religious exercises, with moderation in food," after acknowledging "God's mercy in his late recovery from sickness," he prays "above all for the love of God and my Redeemer, that this blessed principle may be like the main-spring of the machine, prompting all the movements, and diffusing its practical influence through every disposition, action, plan, and design. And (if it be consistent with the divine will) for a more assured hope of the favor of God and Christ. May the God of hope fill me with all joy and peace in believing. O Lord! do Thou break, soften, quicken, warm my cold heart; and teach me to feel an overflowing love and gratitude, or rather a deep and grateful sense of obligation, not as a transient effusion, but as the settled temper and disposition, the practical habit of my soul: that so I may here begin the song of praise, to be sung with more purified and warmed affections in heaven. Worthy is the Lamb; and blessing, honor, glory, and power, etc."

It was in vain his friends urged strongly on him the duty of moderating the exertions to which he returned immediately on his recovery. His journals are filled with the expressions of his anxious interest in public events, as well as with the notices of his sympathy with his friends, and his efforts to discharge faithfully the duties of his station. "Thus," he says, "Dean (Milner) is most urgent in his injunctions of care, lest a relapse—a second attack might be fatal. In what a state are public affairs! Portuguese Court migrated to Brazil—pregnant with important consequences, especially in abolition connection. Russian war—our decree concerning neutral trade—I fear it will produce

American war, (1808.) Bonaparte now busy in Italy; it is supposed planning partition of Turkey. This man is manifestly an instrument in the hands of Providence; when God has done with him, He will probably show how easily He will get rid of him. Meanwhile, may we be of the number of those who trust in Him, and all will be well. Lord, prepare and fit me for discharging the duties of my station in a manner honorable to my Christian profession and useful to my fellow-creatures. I am gradually regaining strength. Reading Ingram's pamphlet on Causes of Increase of Methodism. Able, written in an excellent spirit, and much useful matter, and many excellent practical suggestions; but from its defects, it is evident that all his efforts would be laboring in the fire. Reading also papers on Neutral Question, and Orders in Council as respecting America, and West-Indian Report on State of Islands, Cowper's letters—what a happy art of conceiving and expressing he possesses. Also, refreshing memory on historical events of last few years. O Lord! teach me to see Thy hand in all things, and to refer all to Thee, bearing in mind continually Thy overruling providence, and casting all my care on Thee. Bonaparte's violent and most impudent decree, passing by all he had ordered and done, and treating our retaliating order in council as if it was an original act. Oh! the corrupted currents of this world! Well, the Lord reigneth, and it shall be well with them that fear Him." Such were the occupations, and such the spirit in which he entered upon these duties of the "Christian statesman."

East-Indian Missions possessed a strong claim on his affections, and he wrote



*To W. Hey, Esq.*

“NEAR LONDON, *Feb.* 5, 1808.

\* \* \* \* \*

“You must have collected from the pamphlets that have been advertised, that the subject of East-Indian missions has been interesting the public mind ; but possibly you may not have heard how active and earnest ‘the enemy’ has been (in writing to you I may call things by their true names) in stirring up opposition to any endeavors for diffusing Christian instruction throughout our East-Indian empire. A motion has been made in the Court of Directors by one of the most able, experienced, wealthy, and well-connected members of their body ; the effect of which would have been to bring home all the missionaries, to recall Buchanan by name as a culprit, and to prohibit the circulation or even translation of the Scriptures. The Court seemed in general but too well-disposed to such proceedings, but the most strenuous efforts were made by Mr. Grant and Mr. Parry, Lord Teignmouth, and others, and happily the first attempt was defeated by a considerable majority ; and we hope that, though it is dreadful to think what is the general opinion and feeling of the bulk of the higher orders on this whole subject, we shall be able to resist all the endeavors that are used to bar out the light of truth from those our benighted fellow-subjects. Mr. Perceval has stood our friend. Bonaparte, by all accounts, is preparing on a great scale for an expedition to the East ; and should this country use the powers of its government for the avowed purpose of shutting the Scriptures out of our Indian empire, how could we hope that God would not employ his French army in breaking down the barriers we had

vainly and wickedly been rearing, and thus open a passage by which Christian light might shine upon that darkened land. The Dean's warnings have kept me out of town hitherto, but on Monday next I hope to return to London, and to attend Parliament. Farewell, my dear sir.

"I am yours most sincerely,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

## CHAPTER XXV.

It was at this period that he was called on to take decided ground on the "Catholic Question," in consequence of the introduction of a bill making the celebrated grant to Maynooth College, on the ground that it was important that the priests who were to exert the great influence they avowedly possess over the minds of their people, should be educated under circumstances which would naturally lead them to give their countenance and support to Government, rather than to allow them to imbibe other views, and be strengthened in hostile feelings by being compelled to seek their education abroad. Business, meanwhile, increased on his hands. Private cases abounded. Clients of every kind crowded his ante-room and breakfast-table, while friends flocked around him at all hours, and assembled at his easy and hospitable dinner-table. The parliamentary attendance was "the most severe he ever knew," so that though "the country was exquisitely beautiful in the first burst of spring, or rather summer," he never got to Broomfield, being often absent from his family from Monday morning till Saturday night, or even Sunday morning." It were needless to enumerate the many objects which claimed his attention, some of transient, others of permanent importance. His interest in the Moravian missions, in Greenland, led

him to earnest efforts to cause supplies for the necessities of the stations to be forwarded from Great Britain, while he equally interested himself in the missions to the East.

With "inconceivable sorrow" he heard just at this time "of all the schoolmasters being dismissed in Ceylon. We are to save only about £1500 by what is the moral and religious ruin of the island. O Lord! how deeply do we provoke Thy resentment! Yet have mercy on us, and spare us, much as we deserve punishment. I have had some intercourse with Lord Castle-reagh about it." Happily he did not remonstrate fruitlessly; some of the old schools were restored, and the place of others supplied by new institutions.

The progress of affairs on the Continent was of course a subject of great importance, which he watched with more than common interest. Thus he wrote from East-Bourne, on the southern coast, to which he resorted for summer quarters.

"EAST-BOURNE, *July 19, 1808.*

"MY DEAR MUNCASTER: How many a mile are we now separated! yet, in confirmation of Cowper's beautiful line, 'How fleet is a glance of the mind!' in a moment I can fly on the wings of imagination, from the shore of the Channel to Julius Cæsar's old castle in Eskdale. It seems shamefully long since I wrote to you, but you have kindly let me know of your goings-on, for which I thank you.

"What an extraordinary spectacle is now exhibiting in Spain! Surely Bonaparte would not have proceeded as he has done, if he had not been absolutely intoxicated by his prosperity. To publish to the world that Joseph Bonaparte was to be King, and his children in heredi-

tary succession to succeed to the crown after his death ; and failing his issue, Louis and his heirs ; and failing Louis, Jerome and his heirs ; and failing all these, to revert to us, Napoleon ! Surely this is so heaping insult on injury, that he might have foreseen that human nature would scarcely bear it. I have often thought that it might perhaps please God to pull down this giant when raised to his highest elevation, and apparently glorying the most reasonably, as well as most proudly, in his strength. Do you recollect the chapter in Isaiah, in which the prophet introduces the King of Assyria as at first boasting of his victories, and after having been reminded that he was but an instrument in the hand of the Almighty, he is represented as brought down to the pit amid contempt and derision ? Lowth, I remember, justly states it to be, for its length, the finest poem almost in existence."

He was the more deeply interested in the success of the Spanish arms, from its apparent bearing on the cause of Abolition. On this subject he thus writes to Mr. Stephen :

"MY DEAR STEPHEN : Just at present the Spanish patriots must necessarily be wholly engrossed by the exigencies of their own situation, but doubtless they are precisely in the circumstances in which, if it please God they succeed, (and may the Almighty favor them,) that generous temper of mind will be produced, which will abhor oppression and cruelty, consequently will abolish the Slave Trade. And surely we ought to be immediately taking all proper preparatory measures for diffusing information on the subject. Such prospects open to my view when I look around on both

sides of the Atlantic, as quite to enrapture me. To the fertile soil of your mind, let me commit the seed of this idea, and let me earnestly conjure you to give it immediate attention. Many of the priests appear to have joined the popular cause in Spain; probably, therefore, also in Portugal. They may, perhaps, be worked on by the double motives of the spirit of liberty and of religion, to exert themselves for so glorious an object as ours. I will immediately write to Canning, desiring him to mention the subject to the Spanish deputies. Do you desire Perceval to do the same. I have an idea, also, of writing to Lord Holland, as well as to Brougham, whom we ought here to carry along with us, for his knowledge of Portugal people, etc., render him capable of being a useful ally. Farewell.

"I am ever yours,

"W WILBERFORCE."

At East-Bourne he escaped the crowd of visitors who dogged his Broomfield hours, and he rejoiced in being able to associate freely with his family, and find some time for meditation and for study. But one great hinderance still remained. His letters still followed, pouring in upon him in multitudes. "They are become an unspeakable plague to me. They form my chief occupation, and I must contrive some means of lessening the time spent on them; for there is no acquisition of knowledge, no exercise or improvement of talents." Yet, say his sons, he was as far as possible from cultivating an idle and unmeaning correspondence. In truth, like his open house, and broken London mornings, it sprang of necessity from his peculiar situation. Without his letters he could not have been for years the advocate of every moral and religious cause; the friend and

counsellor of all who were in need of counsel; the very Attorney-General of the unprotected and friendless."

At East-Bourne he remained till the month of November, fully occupied as usual in various plans for the promotion of the happiness and welfare of the human family, from efforts to obtain some additional legislative protection for the Lord's day, to which his attention was invited by W. Alers Hankey, Esq., to letters to Jefferson on the subject of Abolition, and a review of the character of Fox, prepared "in the morning, while dressing." When he did return to London, he abandoned his Broomfield residence at Clapham, a south-eastern suburb, for a house at Kensington Gore, of which he had bought a twenty-five years' lease in the preceding spring. It was not without "great regret that" he "gave up Broomfield, a place endeared to" him "by much happiness enjoyed in it, as well as by its own beauty. I gave up also the living near my friends in this circle; yet I trust my connection with them is so firm that the removal will not weaken it." The Dean of Carlisle suggested another incidental benefit, pointing out to him "a danger in living altogether in Clapham—danger of conceit and spiritual pride, and a cold, critical spirit. He imputes this less to me than to some others—but the danger great." Upon the whole, he thought "the change of residence best—may God bless it—I trust that it is made on grounds of which He approves." The distance of Broomfield made a London house essential to his parliamentary attendance, and separated him almost entirely from his family. By settling within a mile of Hyde Park Corner, he hoped to be much oftener with them; and by the exchange of "the old house in Palace Yard," for

"lodgings on the Terrace, (for I must have a nest close to the House of Commons,)" he hoped to promote that economy by which he still kept up his ample charities.

These ends were in a measure answered. As long, indeed, as he sat for Yorkshire, and actively "represented a tenth part of England," he was often kept throughout the week at his lodgings in Westminster. Yet upon the whole he was more with his family; and from the size of his new house was able to exercise, with greater comfort, the hospitality in which he delighted. There are still many who remember with no little interest, the cheerful and enlightened intercourse of the house and grounds of Kensington Gore. The house was seldom free from guests when he was in it. The first hours in the morning were all that he could strictly call his own, and these were spent in devotional exercises. "I always find that I have most time for business, and it is best done, when I have most properly observed my private dévotions." "In the calmness of the morning," was his common observation, "before the mind is heated and wearied by the turmoil of the day, you have a season of unusual importance for communing with God and with yourself." After this secret intercourse with his heavenly Father, which cheered and sustained his laborious pilgrimage, he joined his assembled household for morning prayer—a service which he conducted himself, and with peculiar interest. With breakfast, which was thus made somewhat late, began his first throng of visitors. His ante-room, which still justified abundantly the witty simile of Hannah More, furnished many breakfast guests; and his extraordinary social powers were never seen to more advantage than in drawing out and har-



monizing all the shades of character and feeling which were here brought suddenly together. Thus on one occasion, whilst he was endeavoring to relax the stiffness of a "starched little fellow whom" he "was not anxious to disgust, Andrew Fuller was announced—a man of considerable powers of mind, but who bore about him very plainly the vestigia ruris. Not a moment was to be lost. So before he came in I said to my little friend: 'You know Andrew Fuller?' 'No, I never heard his name.' 'Oh! then you must know him; he is an extraordinary man, whose talents have raised him from a very low situation.' This prepared the way, and Andrew Fuller did no harm, although he walked in looking the very picture of a blacksmith."

His household economy abounded in cheerful hospitality, and in the highest charms of conversation and social intercourse: but there was nothing costly or luxurious in his style of living; these were banished on principle, and none of his guests missed them. "You can do what you please," said a friend, who was celebrated for the excellence of his table; "people go to you to hear you talk, not for a good dinner." "I am almost ashamed," was the thankful simplicity of his own remark when first entering Kensington Gore, "of the handsomeness of my house, my veranda, etc." "I am almost uneasy about my house and furniture, lest I am spending too much money upon it, so as to curtail my charities." The very next entry is a good commentary on this characteristic fear. "E. forced his way in to see me—the poor midshipman who about eight months ago wrote to me from Morpeth jail, at the suit of a tailor for uniform, whom I got released, and sent him a few pounds. He called to thank me, and said he should never forget my kindness—not ashamed of it;

and would subscribe five pounds per annum to Small Debt Society. Eat yesterday a turkey, sent me by the person whom I helped to recover a landed estate of three or four hundred pounds per annum."

There were some among his nearest connections who grudged the expenditure of time and the sacrifice of domestic privacy which this mode of life required. To a suggestion that he should withdraw to a greater distance from London, in order to escape from it, Mr. Stephen (his brother-in-law) well replied: "There is a peculiar and very important species of usefulness to friends and acquaintances, for which Wilberforce's character and manners fit him in an extraordinary degree; and this talent can nowhere, perhaps, be traded with to greater profit than at Kensington. I think, too, that his public usefulness is promoted by having so respectable a mansion, so much in the eye of the public, and within reach of all who have business with him, or to whom his attention as leader in great public causes ought to be paid. Constituted as the world is, example and influence will be the more efficacious, the more personal consequence is attached to them; and personal consequence will be measured by strangers, nay, insensibly by those who are not strangers, in a certain degree by external appearances. A good house is the most effectual way of attaining this advantage. It meets every eye. It costs far less than the support of splendid equipages, and of bands of liveried servants or their grand fêtes and entertainments. I have often thought when I saw strangers to whom Wilberforce, for important reasons, wished to be courteous at Kensington Gore, that his house made them take in better part that seeming inequality in the ceremonial forms of life which his health, hurry, and care generally obliged him to exact. Be-

sides these he is in the eye of the great and fashionable world, while they drive in Hyde Park, with appearances that proclaim he might live like them if he would ; that it is not for want of fortune that Wilberforce has not, like others, sunk his name in a title ; and that while he abstains from fashionable luxuries, he indulges himself in those congruities to his station and fortune which best become the English gentleman and the Christian, in the means of family comfort, and extensive though simple hospitality. In any material degree to exclude guests, would not only be to impair his usefulness, but to change his nature ; and the witnessing his domestic life is one of the best cures I know for prepossessions against religion—best human incentives to the practice of it, and best guards against those errors and excesses into which misdirected zeal is apt to run. Too much stress, I am aware, may be laid on this kind of usefulness, and it ought not to supersede relative duties of a nearer kind. Still, however, there is something peculiar in Wilberforce's character and situation that seems to point it out as the design of Providence that he should serve his Master in this high and special walk, and should have, so to speak, a kind of *domestic publicity*—that he should be at home a candle set on a candlestick, as well as abroad a city built upon a hill."

Designing at this time a trip to Bath, he wrote to Mr. Perceval (Prime Minister) to ascertain the day on which Parliament was to be assembled ; and finding that Monday had been selected as the day of the week, his anxiety to promote the due observance of the Lord's day caused him at once to beg that if possible another day of the week might be selected, which would not

cause so much travel on the day of rest as the arrangement thus announced would occasion.

"I thank you for your note of yesterday," rejoined the conscientious minister, "and am really sorry that I have given occasion for it. I feel myself the more to blame, because, upon the receipt of your note, it brought back to my recollection (what I had till then forgot) some observations which the Speaker made to me some time ago upon the same subject; if they had been present to my mind when we settled the meeting of Parliament, I would not have fixed it upon a Monday. We were, however, almost driven into that day."

Two days later, he wrote again:

"DOWNING STREET, *Dec. 10, 1808.*

"DEAR WILBERFORCE: You will be glad to hear that it is determined to postpone the meeting of Parliament till Thursday, the 19th, instead of Monday, the 16th, to obviate the objections which you have suggested to the meeting on that day.

"Yours very truly,

"SPENCER PERCEVAL."

"The House," says his diary, "put off nobly by Perceval, because of the Sunday travelling it would have occasioned."

The leisure of the Christmas holidays left him time to look at *Cœlebs*, which had just appeared. None of Hannah More's usual confidants had been let this time into the secret, and no rumor had betrayed its author. "*Cœlebs*," says his diary, "variously talked of. The Henry Thorntons affirm that it can not be Hannah More's, and are strong against it, surely without reason." His critical discernment was more faithful.

"Reading *Coelebs* in the afternoon, and much pleased with it: it is *Hannah More's* all over." He wrote to her:

"KENSINGTON GORE, *Jan. 7, 1809.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND: What! did I not know thy old ward, Hal? I had not read ten pages before I was reminded of aut *Erasmus*, etc. And without paying you any compliments, I may say, that it is a piece in my judgment, of which you, even you, with all your well-earned and well-merited credit, need not be ashamed; on the contrary, I really am delighted with it, and have been kept up night after night reading it after supper. I hope too, which will please you better, that it will do as much good as such a composition, from its very nature, and from the state of mind it necessarily generates, can do. It will, I trust, draw on to other and more serious studies. It will accredit true religion and its ministers, and its consistent professors. It will—but I must break off. I am come too late from London, and have to prepare for a large party to dinner, preceded by a consultation on a matter of great importance to a friend."

## CHAPTER XXVI.

IN the midst of the great political events of the period, the morning of the 8d of May presented to him a more grateful sight. His views in joining the Bible Society have been explained already; and giving others credit for that pure spirit with which he was animated, he saw in its anniversary a "grand" and pleasing spectacle—"five or six hundred people of all sects and parties, with one heart, and face, and tongue." But this was only a moment's calm amidst the troubled scenes in which he was compelled to take an active part. "I want more time for reflection, and consideration of political subjects. The times are highly alarming. The Duke of York's affair, and Parliament's conduct in it, has infused a general jealousy of public men. The House of Commons has lost the public confidence; there is no man of such talents as to take the ascendancy like Pitt or Fox. It would be worse to try to stifle inquiry than to prosecute it. Yet I see the people may be inflamed to madness, or at least to the most mischievous excesses and measures. Oh! may He who rides in the whirlwind direct the storm for our good!"

During the years 1808-9, he took an active part in the discussion of the various matters which were brought before Parliament. At one time provoking the ill-will of the King and royal family by opposing the

wishes of the Duke of York, and at another thwarting the views of ministry with the entire fearlessness of honest independence. Wishing to spend the summer of 1809 in retirement, the offer of a quiet parsonage near Cowper's haunts, fell in exactly with all his inclinations. "I always observe," he would often say, "that the owners of your grand houses have some snug corner in which they are glad to shelter themselves from their own magnificence. I remember dining when I was a young man, with the Duke of Queensbury, at his Richmond villa. The party was very small and select—Pitt, Lord and Lady Chatham, the Duchess of Gordon, and George Selwyn, (who lived for society, and continued in it, till he looked really like the wax-work figure of a corpse,) were amongst the guests. We dined early, that some of our party might be ready to attend the opera. The dinner was sumptuous, the views from the villa quite enchanting, and the Thames in all its glory—but the Duke looked on with indifference. 'What is there,' he said, 'to make so much of in the Thames—I am quite tired of it—there it goes, flow, flow, flow, always the same.'" "What a blessing it is," remarks Mr. Wilberforce, this summer, on meeting an acquaintance who could not be happy out of London, "to have a taste for simple and virtuous pleasures! Religion gives this, but some have it naturally." He possessed it strongly, and enjoyed, therefore, exceedingly this "Cowperizing summer."

To Lord Muncaster he thus communicates the place of his retirement:

"NEAR NEWPORT PAGNELL, *Sept.*, 1809.

"MY DEAR MUNCASTER: And where is Wilber? I hear you saying. Near Newport Pagnell! Out comes

Cary, and the inventive genius and geographical knowledge of the young ones are set to work ; but I defy you all. The truth is, I had been long looking round for a ready-furnished house for a few weeks. Not being able to find one, I carried my household to our old quarters at East-Bourne, and there I should have been glad to continue till November, but for its being so fully peopled that I could not walk out without being joined by people, my only connection with whom arose from our inhabiting different numbers in the same row. I wished to pass a little time as much as possible with my family, of whom I literally see scarcely any thing during the whole session of Parliament. Really, too, though summer by the calendar, it has been so like winter by the weather, as to prompt me rather to look for some snug hiding-place, than to bask, without sunshine, on an open shore. I therefore am come inland, calling first to spend a day with the Speaker, whom I left contrary alike to our own feelings, and his kind pressings to stay ; and then halting for five or six days with Henry Thornton, where I carried Mrs. Wilberforce and my six children to the same house in which were now contained his own wife and eight ; but which he and I once inhabited as chums for several years, when we were solitary bachelors. How naturally I was led to adopt the old patriarch's declaration, With my staff I passed over, etc., and now I am become two bands ! Thence we came to this place, where I inhabit the house of a friend, who having failed in his attempt to hire one ready-furnished in the neighborhood, has kindly lent me his own. It is the parsonage, and he occupies the house of the curate, who is now serving another church, and whom I provide with a temporary residence.



"I must own that from my earliest days, at least my earliest travelling days, I never passed a parsonage in at all a pretty village, without my mouth watering to reside in it. And since the only objection, that of solitude, has been removed, by my bringing my own society along with me, this longing has been still more powerful. The best of this place is, that though the immediate neighborhood has no other beauties than those of peaceful rural scenery, yet we are near the scene of Cowper's rambles; and, devoted as I am to Cowper, the idea of treading in his track is not a little delightful. It is quite classic ground to me, and I shall read both his prose and his verse here with a double relish. I have once already, (but the day was bad, and I mean to do it again,) carried some cold meat to a venerable old oak, to which he was strongly attached. I have been to see Stowe with my charming young friend Bowdler, whom I think I introduced to you in London; if not, I have yet to introduce you to a man who will one day, I think, make a figure. How much was I impressed with the idea of grandeur's not being necessary to happiness!

"My dear Muncaster, I wish we were within talking distance, I should have much both to say and to hear, but unless I had more time at command, I feel no comfort in beginning upon political subjects. Oh! it is a gloomy sky, but there is a sun behind the clouds. In one particular I quite agree with you, in ascribing all the great events which are taking place to a higher hand. Indeed He is always the Supreme Agent, but there are times, and this seems to be one of them, when His arm is lifted up, and His hand displayed with more than common plainness. This consideration administers the greatest comfort to my mind. For being persuaded that there are many among us who still love,

and fear, and serve the great Governor of the universe, I can not but hope that, though justly deserving the vengeance, we shall experience still the mercy of Heaven. \* \* \*

"Believe me ever, my dear Muncaster,

"Yours most sincerely,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

Legh Richmond's neighboring parsonage supplied a piano-forte; and "music generally in the evening" was added to the other sources of his pleasure. Here he thoroughly enjoyed himself. Mr. Richmond was almost his only neighbor, and him he occasionally met with freedom and pleasure. "Dined at Richmond's. His old mother there. It is just twelve years since he became serious from reading my book on Christianity, lent him by a brother divine, who said, 'I am no reader,' and begged him to run it over, as he did in three days. He showed it me in the original cover." This naturally added to the pleasure which he always felt in seeing the interior of a well-ordered parish. He attended with delight at a cottage reading, amongst many of "the people in their common working-clothes;" and he adds that "Richmond, who is a most affectionate, warm-hearted creature, has made great way in Turvey. Every body favors him, and God has greatly blessed his preaching." "Of Olney I hear but a very melancholy account. It is indeed an awful instance of mercies slighted, and privileges abused. I suspect also from what I have heard, that some of the former ministers of the place, like my excellent friend Mr. Newton, not being quite enough on their guard respecting dissenting, and Dissenters, has been not unproductive of evil."

In this unusual quiet, "reading much, correcting the Practical View for a new edition, and much with" his "family," the weeks passed happily away. "Oh! what a blessing it is to be living thus in peace! Surely no one has so much reason to say, that goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life. Never was any one so exempted from suffering, so favored with comforts. Oh! that I were more grateful!"

Mr. John Bowdler's sketch of this time of peaceful harmony is so happily expressed, that though it has appeared in print already, it will be read again with pleasure.

"I arrived here last Saturday morning at breakfast-time, having been kept by Mr. Wilberforce much longer than I intended: but he is like the old man in Sinbad's Voyage—wo be to the traveller that falls into his grasp! It required a considerable effort to disengage myself, and I have promised another short visit on my return, which will be greatly to my inconvenience and delight. Mr. Wilberforce, I think, enjoys his parsonage as much as possible; to say that he is happier than usual, is being very bold; but certainly he is as happy as I ever beheld a human being. He carried me one day to Weston, and we wandered over many a spot which Cowper's feet had trod, and gazed on the scenes which his pen has immortalized. On another day we visited Stowe—'a work to wonder at,' for we were still in the land of poetry and of music too, for Mr. Wilberforce made the shades resound to his voice, singing like a blackbird wherever he went. He always has the spirits of a boy, but" here "not little Sam himself can beat him, though he does his best."

Yet this was no season of indolent recreation or mere idle enjoyment. Whilst he thanked God for

"this wholesome retirement," he was most anxious to turn it to the best account. "O Lord!" he prays, "direct and guide me so as to make my residence here a blessing to me." And he watched as well as prayed. "Laying out" his "plans so as to secure time for evening devotions, emptying" his "mind of business and literature;" examining himself whether his "mind had wandered whilst reading the responses or the psalms in church, or during the singing of praises to God;" and reminding himself, "that if here I find not my mind ungovernable, yet that this is a most favorable situation: all about me favorable to holiness, except that I commonly find literature more seductive than any thing. I should then be striving for the habit of heavenly-mindedness, that I may maintain it in more worldly scenes and societies." Here, therefore, as well as in the crowded life of London, he could exclaim upon his Sundays: "O blessed days! these, which call us from the bustle of life, and warrant us in giving up our studies, and our business, and cultivating communion with God."

Some days, too, he set apart in this season of retirement, for more entire devotion to religious offices; and then, with such a measure of abstinence as his strength allowed, he gave the day to prayer and meditation. Deep at these times was his unfeigned humiliation, as he searched out before God all the suspected corners of his heart, condemning himself—for "selfishness, though I do not pass for selfish, and am not allowed to be so; Lord, increase my love to others"—for "ambition, or rather worldliness, but ill cured, often bubbling up and breaking out, though my judgment, I trust, does not allow them, and though I am ashamed of them"—for "want of love, of real caring for my fellow-

creatures"—for "want of delighting in God. Alas! can I say that I find more pleasure in religious meditation than in literature, which always presents itself to my mind as an object of gratification?" Then, too, would he note down the remembered sins of long past years, feeling he had gained his end when he could add: "How does this review, in which my own mind fixes on specific objects, shame me! How should I be ashamed if others could see me just as I really am! I often think I am one grand imposture. My heart is heavy; oh! there is nothing that can speak peace to the wounded spirit, but the Gospel promises—and the promise is sure. God is love; and is able to save to the uttermost, and He will cast out none who come to Him. He it is, I trust, who has excited in me a disposition to come, and I will therefore press forward, humbly indeed, but trusting to His mercy who has promised so many blessings to them that seek Him. O Lord! yet strengthen me, and, if it please Thee, fill me with all peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Amen."

At times, too, there are bursts of more than ordinary joy. "I humbly hope that I have felt this day, and still feel, somewhat of the powers of the world to come. I feel indeed the deepest sense of my own sinfulness; but blessed be God for His gracious promises. To Thee, O Lord, I humbly devote myself; oh! confirm me to the end. Make me perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle me. O *præclarum illum diem*." "What cause have I for thankfulness! Which way soever I look, I am heaped up with blessings, mercies of all sorts and sizes. I wish not to spend time in writing, but oh! let me record the loving kindness of the Lord."

In the midst of this life of quiet, his ordinary political cares startle us with their unwonted sound. "I

opened the papers this morning to see if there is any confirmation of Bonaparte's madness; for I can not but think it conformable to the providence of God, to manifest thus His ability in a moment to pull down the lofty from his vain-glorious throne, to confound the wisdom of the politic and the plans of the crafty. Lord Castlereagh and Canning fought a duel early on Thursday morning. What a humiliating thing it is! In what a spirit must our national counsellors have been deliberating!"

A letter to Mr. Bankes, written on the second of October, turns upon these subjects.

"Then this strange hurricane of the elements of the administration. Could you have conceived any men being so absurd, to say nothing of higher motives, as to make the public exhibition afforded by Castlereagh and Canning? I can only account for it in the former, to whom as the challenger it is nine parts in ten most probably to be ascribed, by his Irish education and habits. *Manent adhuc vestigia ruris*. I wish the King would declare that neither of them should ever serve him again in a public station. That would effectually prevent the spreading of the example."

## CHAPTER XXVII.

UPON the 20th of November, his quiet Buckinghamshire quarters were again exchanged for the neighborhood of London, where he at once entered on his usual busy life.

"Dined with Percival; who very kind and good-natured; and pleased me more than ever before by his speech about not exciting a spirit against America." "My time," he tells Mr. Banks, "was never more fully occupied when Parliament was not sitting; foreseeing that when the House should meet, I must almost renounce all private society, I have been both giving and receiving a most unusual number of visits." These brought before him a most miscellaneous set of characters—from "Lord Sidmouth, who dined *tête-à-tête*, and much political talk with him," to "a missionary going to the Namaqua country," and "poor W., who declared most seriously that he liked spiders better than my dinner. 'Spiders are very good food;' and looking round the corners of the room, 'You have no spiders here,' as much as to say, I would soon convince you if you had—a singular man—appears a strong predestinarian."

But though mixing freely in society, he did not forget to watch carefully for the improvement of his time.

His high sense of the value of it led him to watch

over his conduct in society ; and though probably unrivalled in the happy art of leading conversation to the most improving topics, yet he was often little satisfied with his attempts. Thus he says, after giving a "dinner to Lord N. and I. H., who chatted till late ; Lord N. a strange twist ; I fear the evening was sadly misspent. No efforts to improve the opportunity and impress them aright. When in my closet, as now, I feel a sincere desire to do good to others, and to embrace occasions for it ; but, alas ! when in society I am too apt to lose the sense of God's presence, or possess it feebly and faintly, and I do not try to turn the conversation, and practise the company regulations which I have made. Lord, quicken me." "I have a vast multiplicity of objects soliciting my attention . . . and I seem to myself to be failing in the discharge of the duties of my several relations, as member of Parliament, as father, and as master. To Thee, O God ! I fly, through the Saviour ; enable me to live more worthy of my holy calling ; to be more useful and efficient, that my time may not be frittered away unprofitably to myself and others, but that I really may be of use in my generation, and adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour. I long to carry the plan through for lessening the number of oaths—for reviving the Proclamation Society ; but I am a poor, helpless creature ; Lord, strengthen me."

During the session of Parliament which followed, his time, attention, and feelings, were all deeply interested by the subjects which came before it. Much attached as he was to Mr. Perceval, he voted against him in all the stages of the inquiry respecting the ill-fated Walcheren expedition ; and in the case of Sir Francis Burdett, he opposed his committal to the Tower, and spoke in behalf of a "reprimand." In Sir S. Romilly's Bill



for reduction of Capital Punishments, he was also warmly interested, and as usual, the various details of the "Slave Trade," "Indian affairs," and many objects of charity and public usefulness received his support.

Near as was his family residence at Kensington Gore to the House of Commons, it was still no uncommon event for him to be detained at his lodgings from Monday until Saturday, and his diary contains entries of almost numberless subjects which were claiming his attention at this time. From these various employments he was suddenly removed by an accident, which he describes in a letter to Lord Muncaster :

"LONDON, *June* 18, 1810.

"MY DEAR MUNCASTER : The kindness which I have ever experienced at your hands, assures me that if you were to hear a loose report of my having been confined up-stairs for a week in a recumbent posture, you would become very uneasy till you should receive some authenticated report of my well-doing. You would, and you will nevertheless laugh heartily when you hear the whole story : That playing at cricket with Mr. Babington, a ball struck my foot with great violence, and that by the positive injunctions of my surgeon, I have been ever since sentenced to a sofa. It will lessen the marvel, and render the tale less laughable, to hear that my son William was the main personage in the dramatis personæ of the cricket-players, and I have not played with him at cricket before, for I know not how long. But here, as in so many other instances, I have abundant cause for thankfulness to the good providence of God ; for Mr. Pearson (and there is not a more able surgeon in London) declares that if the ball had struck me an inch or two higher—and it is very uncommon for

a ball to come along shaving the ground as that did, it would almost certainly have broken my leg."

He much feared that he should not again reach the House of Commons before the prorogation. "It is a great disappointment to me; but I hope it is the indication of Providence that I am to be quiet." But on the 20th, "having the Sheffield Address, loyal and constitutional, and well signed," he "resolved to present it, and so was carried to the door of the House, and limped to the Treasury Bench. I had prepared myself for a speech of an hour of closing advice, and useful parting admonition, but there not being above forty or fifty members, and as the appearance would evidently have been that of going cold-bloodedly to make a formal speech, I had not nerves for it; yet wishing to say something, I could not abridge well." One object of this parting speech was to enforce the reasons by which he had been led a month before to vote for a motion on Parliamentary Reform.

On this subject he says: "I was, in fact, one of the most moderate of all reformers; in fact, conceiving a reform would some time or other take place, I wished we were well through it, being persuaded it was a measure of which it might truly be said, that the danger of going too far was far greater than that of not going far enough. And that now when I really believe the well-disposed part of our country was rather against than for the measure, was just the period when it might be adopted with the greatest safety, because with the least danger of yielding to any wild and dangerous speculations. But I forget my resolution to abstain from the discussion, and am detaining both you and myself too long. Have you seen the testimony borne

to our unrivalled Constitution by an American gentleman of great ability, in a pamphlet lately published on the Genius and Disposition of the French Government, which he contrasts with those of our own? I have been longing to see it well abridged. Indeed I really have had thoughts of abridging it myself, together with another, by the same author." These were his fixed opinions on the question of reform in Parliament.

The last entry in his journal for the month of June, 1810, is: "The session of Parliament closed on Thursday, and now a long reach of time is before me, uninterrupted by parliamentary business. I have still, however, several matters to wind up, which have been delayed by my accident and confinement. O Lord! how thankful should I be that no bone was broken, or greater mischief done! I have not time to write, so go to prayer. I mean to spend a day in serious exercises, so soon as I clear away my epistolary debts. May God direct me aright, and enable me to grow in grace. I fear I shall not be able to live here in quiet; if so, I must move. The command of my time is the grand desideratum with me during the recess. I am writing a letter to my constituents to diffuse principles of thankfulness, moderation, and acquiescence in a moderate reform."

The garden at Kensington Gore was one of his great sources of pleasure, when his time was at his own command. During the sitting of Parliament, he could "never get there sufficiently early, or stay there in the morning long enough, to witness the progress of the spring;" but now that he had somewhat more leisure, whenever the weather made it possible, he sat long, both writing and with his books, under a spreading walnut-tree, which was known amongst his children as

his study. "Pretty quiet to-day—went out and sat under walnut-tree, where now writing. I should like much to stay in this sweet place, amidst my books, if I could be quiet." "We are just one mile," he tells an American correspondent, (the venerable John Jay,) "from the turnpike-gate at Hyde Park Corner, which I think you will not have forgotten yet, having about three acres of pleasure-ground around my house, or rather behind it, and several old trees, walnut and mulberry, of thick foliage. I can sit and read under their shade, which I delight in doing, with as much admiration of the beauties of nature (remembering at the same time the words of my favourite poet, 'Nature is but a name for an effect, whose cause is God') as if I were 200 miles from the great city." But in other respects he was less favorably circumstanced. "My situation near town produces numerous visitors, and frequent invitations, difficult and painful to resist."

These interruptions lasted as long as he remained near London, so that he could often only write his letters by stealing to a den at the "Nuisance," (a small adjoining house which he had purchased,) "and even there I should be no more safe if it were known I had such a lurking-hole, than a fox would be near Mr. Meynell's kennel," and his diary, as usual, is filled with notices of important engagements by which his time was as much filled as it was by public business during the session. Even the time spent in society, he longed to redeem and make it an opportunity of glorifying God his Redeemer. Thus he says: "Young Lady N. ascribes her serious sense of things to meeting me two years ago. Oh! what cause have we for ascribing all to God, who can use any instrument! I fear I was sadly negligent about her and the others. Not being

watchful for others' souls, is one of my greatest standing faults; and O my soul! guard against being deceived by the mistaken judgment passed upon thee by others! How strange is it, that though we *know them to be mistaken*, we are often liable to be impressed by them! I really do not remember having had any serious talk with her." He longed for greater quiet, and soon afterwards withdrew into the country.

In a letter to Lord Muncaster, he says: "During my confinement from my accident, my being such a fair shot for all who had not much to do with their time, procured me incessant callers, and my unanswered letters accumulated on my hands to a size that was quite terrific. I have only just (indeed not quite) cleared away the arrears. Have you read the *Lady of the Lake*? Like a good economist, I waited till it should come out in octavo, but I had but tasted it before, though it had been folio instead of quarto, I could not without extreme difficulty have resisted the impulse to gratify my appetite for it without stint. Really I did not think that I continued in such a degree subject to the fascination of poetry. I have been absolutely bewitched. I could not keep the imaginary personages out of my mind when I most wished to remove them. How wonderful is this dominion over the heart which genius exercises! There are some parts of the poem that are quite inimitable—all that precedes and follows, 'And, Saxon, I am Roderick Dhu.' I regret there not being so much of moral as in *Marmion*. I must break off—farewell."

Early in September he took possession of an empty country-house, which the kindness of a friend had placed at his disposal. His own was lent at the same time, and he assured its inmates: "It is a pleasure to me that

my house should be of use to my friends when I am away from it." "I always feel the more rewarded for the money I spent upon Kensington Gore, when my friends come to it freely, whether we are present or absent. For those who are occupying a friend's house in his absence, what so natural as to have another friend occupying their own? I only beg you will be in no hurry to quit."

As soon as he was well established, he thus writes to Lord Muncaster.

"HERSTMONCEUX, *Sept.* 25, 1810.

"I can not be sure whether or not I have written to you within the last fortnight or three weeks. If not, you will scarcely be able to make out my lurking-hole. How much you will be surprised when I tell you I am within a few miles of the tremendous John Fuller. It must surely be a strange wild region that contains such inhabitants—some outlandish place beyond the limits of civilized society, where 'sea-monsters whelp and stable.' Indeed, were not Mr. Speaker at a distance but little greater, I should scarcely feel secure within the reach of such a barbarian. But it is said that the fiercest animals feel an inextinguishable dread of the keeper who has once established his ascendancy over them, so I trust to the efficacy of the recollection of the great wig, and repose in security. To explain—I am in a corner of Sussex, in an excellent house lent me by a friend, who, from family circumstances, is kept away from it some weeks longer; and in a place almost as pretty as the neighborhood of the sea ever is. Not that it is so near the salt water, or so beautiful as Muncaster. There is a fine old castle here, a mere Novus homo, however, compared with yours, having been

built in Henry VIth's time, but it was in complete preservation till about twenty years ago. And though this is a very good private gentleman's habitation, yet when one sets it against a complete castle, one side of which was 200 feet long, and which was in the complete costume of the age in which it was reared, it dwindles into as much insignificance as one of the armed knights of the middle ages, who should suddenly be transformed into the curtailed dimensions of one of the box lobby loungers of the opera, or even one of the cropped and docked troopers of some of our modern regiments. We have been here about three weeks, and I am striving to spend less time at my desk, both on account of my health, and that I may, when alone, and it is in my power, have a little time for reading to my wife and children. I wish you and yours could be of the party. But I can only wish it. Accustomed as I am to all the conveniences of a highly-civilized state of society, I can not without wonder as well as thankfulness, call to mind, that here I am at one extreme of the kingdom, writing to you in the other, and not doubting of conveying to you very speedily the tidings of me and mine, and of receiving from you the account of your goings on, though secured behind the natural ramparts of your nine-fold wall of mountains. O my dear Muncaster! we are not—I am sure I feel it continually—we are not half grateful enough for the blessings with which we are favored; above all, for the spiritual blessings. I can not help at times, giving way I will not say, but at least lending an ear to suggestions which arise in my mind, that our comforts will be abridged, and our pride be humbled. But I will abstain from striking this string at least at present. Let me not excite melancholy ideas in your mind. If I can not be gay, let me at least be affectionate, etc."

Lord M.'s reply produced the following :

" You aroused me, my dear Muncaster, by showing yourself at least as well acquainted with this place and its environs as I was after residing here a month. You are right, at least substantially so ; the castle is in the park, but, *horrendum dictu* ! it was pulled down and the bare walls and ivy mantled towers alone left standing, the materials being applied to the construction of a new house, which on the whole, cost twice as much, I understand, as it would have taken to make the castle habitable, for it had fallen a little into arrears. I don't know, however, that we who inhabit the new mansion may not have made a good exchange by gaining in comfort what is lost in magnificence ; for the old building was of such a prodigious extent, that it would have required the contents of almost a whole colliery to keep it warm ; and I think few things are more wretched (of the kind, I mean) than living in a house which it is beyond the powers of the fortune to keep in order ; like a great body with a languid circulation, all is cold and comfortless. I see from the newspapers, that the Duke of Norfolk has been in your part of the world. Has he not been in your old castle ? Not that you would much covet his visit. There is a strange anomaly, an utter unsuitableness between Jockey of Norfolk, and the peaceful dales of Westmoreland, the seats of peace, and love, and melody, which he would people with the throng of the wassailers in *Comus*. I hope that you yourselves are enjoying the witcheries of your fascinating prospects. I quite long to revisit those much loved valleys, and lakes, and rocks, and waterfalls. I think the longing has been much increased by the perusal of the *Lady of the Lake*, which I have read with delight and wonder. I really think that from



the place where Fitz James first lights on the mountaineer to the end of the battle, there has not often been a more spirited and interesting poem. My dear Muncaster, your kind heart will be sorry to hear that my friend Bowdler is going abroad for a milder climate, but we greatly fear too late. But for my being married, I have thought that I would go as his companion. He is really, take him all together, one of the most extraordinary young men I ever knew. If it should please God to restore him to health sufficient to enable him to carry on his profession, this will one day appear. But to those who love him as well as I do, it is an unspeakable comfort to reflect that he is, I believe, perfectly ready to make the great exchange. I often think what a change it is! What astonishment will seize the minds of those whose thoughts have been studiously turned away from all such serious subjects. My dear Muncaster, may we also be ready. My heart is very heavy. I know you will sympathize with me. God bless you and yours."

Mr. Bowdler himself says to Mr. Wilberforce :

"MY DEAR SIR: We shall probably not meet again for many months; and it may be the will of God that in this world we shall meet no more. Let me assure you that you and Mrs. W., and your little circle, will be very, very often present to my thoughts, and never without feelings of the warmest gratitude and affection. The hours which I have passed under your roof, have been among the happiest of my life; and I shall ever esteem the advantages and opportunities of improvement which I have there enjoyed, as among the choicest blessings which the mercy of a most merciful Father has showered on me. May the same bountiful Lord repay to you and yours ten-fold all your kindness to me."

One main purpose of his summer retirement was to "watch the tempers and dispositions of his children." "I mean," he tells Mr. Babington, "to make education my grand object. Pray for me, that I may be able to succeed. I can truly say I feel my own deficiencies." "We are about to quit our pleasant retirement," he tells Dr. Coulthurst, "pleasant, chiefly because it has been so retired, where we have been residing for almost three months. This occasional abstraction from the bustle and turmoil of the world, is highly beneficial to mind, body, and estate; and I have had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with my own children, who, it really is not exaggeration to declare, seldom get a quiet minute with me during the sitting of Parliament."

As he had not married until middle life, when he was most busily engaged in his engrossing duties, this was literally true. So long as they were infants, he had not time to seek amusement from them. Even whilst they were of this age, it made a deep impression on his mind when one of them beginning to cry as he took him up, the nurse said naturally, by way of explanation: "He always is afraid of strangers." This he could not suffer to continue when they grew out of mere infancy. During the session, indeed, he was so busy, and so much from home, that he could see little of them through the week; but Sunday was his own, and he spent it in the midst of his family. His children, after meeting him at prayers, went with him to the house of God; repeating to him in the carriage hymns or verses, or passages from his favorite Cowper. Then they walked with him in the garden, and each had the valued privilege of bringing him a Sunday nosegay, for which the flowers of their little gardens had been

hoarded all the week. Then all dined together, at an early hour, in the midst of cheerful yet suitable conversation. "'Better,'" was one of his Sunday common-places, "says the wise man, 'is a dinner of herbs, where love is, than a stalled ox and hatred therewith;' but, my children, how good is God to us! He gives us the stalled ox and love too." Never was religion seen in a more engaging form than in his Sunday intercourse with them. A festival air of holy and rational happiness dwelt continually around him.

But with Sunday, ended for the time the possibility of domestic life. "While the House is sitting, I become almost a bachelor." When the session was over, and he had retired into the country, it was his delight to live amongst his children. His meals were as far as possible, taken with them; he carried them out with him on little pleasurable excursions, and joined often in their amusements. Every day, too, he read aloud with them, setting apart some time in the afternoon for lighter and more entertaining books, (one of these this summer, was the *Arabian Nights*,) and selecting one of them to read more serious works to him while he dressed. Happy was the young performer who was chosen for the office. The early and quiet intercourse which his dressing-room afforded, drew forth all a father's tenderness, whilst the reading was continually changed into the most instructive conversation.

All his efforts were aimed at opening the mind, creating a spirit of inquiry, and strengthening the powers; while he was jealous of such acquirements as yielded an immediate return, and so afforded opportunities for gratifying vanity.

All this time he was watching carefully the indications of their various character; and many a remaining

entry of the long-past incidents of childhood, show how observant was his eye of things of which he seemed to take no note. "—— a heavy-looking child, but showing at times much thought—used (in fact) in play yesterday, Euclid's axiom: Things that are equal to the same are equal to one another." "—— has far more courage and character than all the other children." "Heard W. read to me for an hour after dinner, one of Miss Edgeworth's Tales. How entirely free from religion is her morality, which, however, stolen from Scripture!" Stopped to buy —— a book, because he was good yesterday—having much wished to go with the rest; and though at first he cried, he almost immediately got the better of it, and desired (our driving off being a little delayed) to come and wish me good-by, which he did with a cheerful face. This deserves most serious consideration and suitable treatment."

The practical character of his personal piety was of the utmost moment in his treatment of his children. He was always on his guard against forcing their religious feelings, and shielded them carefully from the poison of Antinomian teaching. Though he never weakly withheld any necessary punishment, he did not attempt to dissemble the pain which its infliction cost him. "Alas!" he says at such a time, "—— grieved me much to-day, discovering the same utter want of self-government or self-denial when disappointed of any thing on which he had set his heart, as he had done before. He behaved very ill. I talked with him plainly, and set him a punishment. Poor fellow! it made my heart heavy all the evening, and indeed ever since. But I hope he will mend. God will grant much to prayer; and I humbly trust it is our object to train him up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."

This careful observation of his children's characters, joined with the most lively tenderness, is beautifully illustrated by a paper of directions which he drew up about this time for the private use of two of his sons, who were now at school together.

#### BROTHERLY LOVE AND CONDUCT.

"Hints for my dear —, to be often read over, with self-examination.

- "1. Endeavor to bear in mind, that you will be often tempted to behave to your brother — not so well as you ought. That you may be on your guard against all such temptations—
- "2. Recollect, if you can, what the occasions are which have most commonly led you to behave ill to your brother, and try to keep them in your memory by now and then thinking them over; and when such occasions are about to occur, whether at play, in reading, or wherever else, then be doubly on your guard, and try to lift up your heart in an ejaculation to God, that you may be enabled to resist the temptation; and if you do resist it, lift up your heart again in thanksgiving.
- "3. Remember one season of temptation will always be, when you are at play, especially where there are sides, whether you are on the same side as — or not.
- "4. Remember it is not sufficient not to be unkind to your brother; you must be positively kind to all, and how much more, then, to a brother!
- "5. Remember you will be under a temptation to resist unkindly —'s disposition to command you. If Christ tells us not to resent little outrages from

any one, (see Matt. 5 : 39, 44,) how much less should you resent his commanding you ! Though perhaps it may not be quite right in itself, yet an elder brother has a right to some influence from being such. See 1 Pet. 5 : 5.

- “6. Often reflect that you are both children of the same father and mother ; how you have knelt together in prayer ; have played together as children, and have sat round the same table, on a Sunday, in peace and love. Place the scene before your mind’s eye, and recollect how happy mamma and I have been to see you all around us good and and happy.
- “7. You are not so lively by nature as he is, but be willing always to oblige him by playing at proper times, etc., though not disposed of yourself. Nothing more occurs to me, except—and this both mamma and I desire to press strongly on you—to desire you to be on your guard against being out of humor on a little raillery, and always to laugh at it ; nothing shows good humor more than taking a joke without being fretful or gloomy.

“May God bless my dearest boy, and enable him to profit from the above suggestions of his most affectionate father,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

#### BROTHERLY LOVE AND CONDUCT.

“Hints for my dear ——, to be often looked over, with self-examination.

- “1. Endeavor to bear in mind, that you will be often tempted to be not so kind to your brother —— as

you ought to be. That you may be on your guard against the temptations when they do occur—

- “2. Recollect, if you can, what the occasions are which have most commonly led you to be unkind to your brother, and keep them in your memory by now and then thinking them over; and when such occasions are about to occur again, whether at play, in reading, or wherever else, then be doubly on your guard, and lift up your heart in prayer to God, that you may be enabled to resist the temptation; and if you have been enabled to get the better of it, lift up your heart to God again in thanksgiving.
- “3. Remember one season of temptation will always be, when you are at play, especially where there are sides, whether —— is on your side or on the opposite side.
- “4. Remember it is not enough not to be unkind to —— . We ought to be positively kind to all, but how much more so to a brother!
- “5. Remember you will be tempted to command him too much. Guard therefore against this temptation.
- “6. Sometimes reflect that he and you are children of the same parents. Recollect him a little fat child, and how we used to kiss his neck and call him Bon. Recollect how you have knelt together in prayer with mamma and me, and how, especially on Sunday, you have sat round the same table with us in peace and love. Try to place the scene before the eyes of your mind, and recollect how happy your mamma and I have appeared to see you all good and happy around us.
- “7. I will specify the times and circumstances in which

you ought to be peculiarly on your guard against behaving improperly.—When you have done your own business, or are not inclined to do it, beware of interrupting him in doing his.—When you are with older companions than yourself, beware of behaving to him less kindly, or with any thing like arrogance.—When you are in the highest spirits, having been at play or from whatever other cause, you are apt to lose your self-government, and to be out of humor on having your inclination crossed in any way. Beware in such circumstances of being unkind to him

“May God bless my dearest —, and enable him to profit from the above suggestions of his most affectionate father,  
W. WILBERFORCE.”

These hints afford a fair sample of his mode of managing his children. He constantly referred them to the highest principles of action. Education, indeed, when otherwise conducted, he always looked at with suspicion. “William Allen,” he says shortly afterwards, “and Joseph Fox came about Lancaster’s schools, to tell me all about them, and press me to be a vice-president. Heard Fox’s most interesting account.” For a fortnight he was doubtful how to answer this appeal; but having fully weighed the question, he “wrote to William Allen to decline being a committee man, though it gave me great pain to refuse him; but emulation and vanity are the vital breath of the system.”

Devoted as he was all through his life with so much patient perseverance to the deliverance of the negro race, his zeal for that great cause never led him to neglect any opportunity of doing present good. He was



just as active in redressing individual wrongs, just as ready to assist the distress, and poverty, and friendlessness which surrounded his own doors as to labor in the world's eye for the ill-used tribes of Africa. This, while it increased his usefulness, saved him also from that diseased contraction of thought and feeling which is so apt to grow on those who are identified with one pursuit. He was the very opposite of "Mr. Fantom." The healthy vigor of benevolent exertion was ever fostered in his mind by his mingling individual acts of kindness with all his general plans. Thus whilst he was "calling upon Perceval, and discussing with Macaulay, Stephen, Brougham, and others, about African and West-Indian matters," he was also "off early to London to the War Office about the boy Nowell, unlawfully recruited;" and finding that Lord Palmerston had not yet read the minutes of the second examination, which decisive," he went on "to the Colonial Office about the case of Marsden and a poor woman," getting home at last "too late for dinner;" and being "off" again next morning "after breakfast to the Horse Guards, where talked to Lord Palmerston about the poor boy," and got the necessary "orders sent down for his discharge:" and this is only a sample of a multitude of works of mercy in which he was every day engaged. And yet he could say in his most private entries: "Alas! I feel my uselessness and unprofitableness, but I humbly hope I desire to employ my faculties so as may be most for God's glory, and my fellow-creatures' benefit." It was this high motive which gave such uniformity to his conduct. "I hear," says his diary, with beautiful simplicity, a few weeks later, "that I am likely to be popular now amongst the West Riding clothiers about poor Nowell, the boy falsely

enlisted. How this shows that God can effect whatever He will, by means the most circuitous, and the least looked for. This might have a great effect in case of an election."

With the new year set in the full tide of public business. The King's illness was painfully confirmed, and the appointment of a regency inevitable. In these circumstances, the mind of Mr. Pitt's friend reverted naturally to the debates of 1788; and to the great actors in that drama who had left the stage before himself. His mind was constitutionally free from that fretfulness of spirit which too often embitters such recollections, and his estimate of things was just and sober. "I believe," he tells Mr. Babington, from whom he had heard an instance of "Perceval's sweetness melting down Whitbread's rough churlishness, and extorting a eulogy for suavity and kindness," "that he is a man of undaunted spirit, but his modesty prevents his taking that high tone, which at such a time as the present rendered Pitt so equal to the emergency."

The mental derangement of the King, and the necessity of making provision for carrying on the government during its continuance, caused great excitement in the political circles; in which he largely participated, and his journal abounds with entries which manifest the anxiety with which he watched the progress of events, as well as with striking comments on the characters and actions of the most prominent members of Parliament.

In the midst of this "bustle" graver entries intervene, and reflections which strikingly illustrate the calm and watchful temper in which he passed through its turmoil. "Lying awake long in the night, my thoughts were not naturally so serious as usual, and my mind

more disturbed by the rushing in of a great variety of topics. Alas! how much of my life is fumed away in trifles which leave no mark behind, and no fruit! O Lord! enable me to redeem the time better in future; to live more on plan, though really this has been in some degree my object, and to be more devoted in heart and life to Thy glory, and to the good of my fellow-creatures." These were not the indolent desires of occasional feeling; strict practical rules grew out of them. "Let me try to keep myself reminded of invisible things by something which will call attention, though not produce pain, and by varying the expedients; when I grow familiar with one, I may use another. I did try a little pebble in my shoe. Why should such secondary means be despised? Oh! that they were unnecessary, and so they may become by degrees! Oh! may I learn to live above this world, and set my affections on things above!"

"Friends dined with me, and staid too late—and though I brought out books and read passages, it was wasteful work. How foolish that people can not understand each other better! What good done by this visit? How unprofitable was our intercourse, partly from want of topics ready for conversation! They would often remind me of useful subjects for discussion—yet last night I really was thinking how to do the young man good, but no aspirations—I am quite faulty here." "Dined at the Speaker's—he very kind, and particularly obliging in his public attentions to me. Sat between Bankes and Sir John Sebright—latter a man of much energy in the pursuits he engages in, and many right dispositions, feelings, and opinions—very upright as a member of Parliament. I tried to introduce some religious conversation, but I knew not well

how. Alas! I was too much admiring and enjoying the splendor, etc., in itself. It is much the handsomest thing of its size I ever saw, and so say others who live in and see the most splendid houses; but how little did I keep my heart with due diligence! how little was I poor in spirit, the mortified, humble, meek servant of the lowly Jesus! Surely I was intoxicated with the glitter and parade, and too much like others. It must be good for me, who am called so much necessarily into social intercourse, to retire when I can to my own home and family, and give up as much as possible dining out—my health is a fair plea for it—it always suffers from late dining, though less I think than formerly.”

The following letter to Lord Muncaster, not only describes his occupations, but exhibits the cheerfulness with which he met the constant pressure upon his mind and full engagement of his time.

“NEAR LONDON, *April* 10, 1811.

“Alas! my dear Muncaster, how little your sanguine hopes of my being by this time at liberty, are verified! To-day, as again to-morrow, I am doomed to that vile and hateful drudgery of presiding in a committee, where a private bill is very hotly contested; and what is worse, contested between those who are all my friends; and what is worst of all, the case is one in which it is really very difficult to form a clear judgment. Yet, notwithstanding this difficulty, you would suppose, from the warmth with which the partisans on each side abuse the other, that there was no room for any difference of opinion, but that dishonesty or sheer stupidity could alone cause any one to hesitate on which side to give his vote. I am now writing on the evening of Saturday, the 13th of April, having every day since that on

which I wrote the first five lines of my letter, been incessantly engrossed, except on the day which of course was claimed by considerations and feelings peculiar to that season when we commemorate the event on which we depend for all our hopes of future happiness. Alas! I am beginning my recess with so great an arrear of business that I am ready to burn my papers, and *shut up shop*.

"You surprise me by your account of the blooming state of your walls, though I was prepared to hear accounts which might seem strange to any one who did not know that the seasons with you are not such as your degree of latitude might lead any one to suppose. But, my dear Muncaster, though you have staid till all around you is so beautiful that you can scarcely persuade yourself to quit the loves of the castle; yet come you must, or I shall send the serjeant-at-arms to disturb your privacy; and what is more, you must bring your daughters with you, or they also shall be summoned on some pretense or other, to give evidence concerning the practicability of a tunnel through Scawfell to facilitate your communication with Winandermere. We abound with projects this session, and there are some little less extraordinary. I guess how you will rejoice in the late accounts from Portugal. They really gratify me more than any public news which I have heard for many years. Why, it is enough to drive Bonaparte mad. What! L'Enfant gaté flying before Lord Wellington?

"I must break off. Nil mihi rescribas, attamen ipse veni. With kind remembrances,

"Ever yours,

"W. WILBERFORCE.

"Bring the lasses."

None of this abundant crop of "projects" caused Mr. Wilberforce more trouble than Lord Sidmouth's abortive attempt to regulate the licenses of Protestant dissenting teachers. He disliked the whole measure, but feared especially lest, whilst aimed at others, it should cripple the pastoral instructions of the clergy. This fear he early expressed to Mr. Perceval; having, on the 26th March, "opened to him about the North-American Indians—the Irish people and system, actual and proper—the English Church—the clergy, and the operation of the Conventicle Act; with the benefit derived from religious societies conducted with caution by the minister himself. I told Perceval these effects in Richardson's case and others, and stated to him Richmond's diligence and its effects."

"I was chiefly afraid lest he should stop the private religious meetings of the clergy; and I urged the danger of all who should come under serious impressions, going off in that case to the Methodists, and described the excellence of their discipline."

The Methodists rose against it as one man; and on the motion for its second reading in the Lords, it was negatived without a division, and with the expressed concurrence of the Lord Primate and the government. Yet out of this business grew one of those irritating rumors which infest the course of the most simple-minded politician. "Have I told you," he asks Mr. Stephen, "that it is reported and credited, that Lord Sidmouth told the deputation that I had been of his cabinet, and had instigated him to the measure, and had been his counsellor; and that when Thompson told me what Lord Sidmouth had said, I stamped upon the ground and wept, exclaiming: Then Lord Sidmouth has betrayed me—or as some accounts give it, that I

was in an agony; but these agree in saying that I exclaimed: Lord Sidmouth has betrayed me? (You see that this implies the most consummate villainy possible.) Yet this is believed of a man whom some of them, at least, must know to have defeated a similar attack, only worse, in 1796 or 1797, and who has had nothing to do with the Methodists since, but their being such zealous friends to him in the contest of 1807. By the way, I have not mentioned to Thompson what I doubt about mentioning even to you, (on account of Matt. 6:3,) but I will—as it bears on my real feelings about the Methodists, (though more about one of their founders,) that from respect to that great and good man, Charles Wesley, I many years ago prevailed on two friends to join in allowing his widow an annuity, which she still receives. I have often, I own, thought it a great reflection on the Methodists, that they suffered such a person to be in real want, as she was when I undertook her cause.”

It is strange that such a report should have gained credit, but so it was; and he heard of “the Sidmouthian declaration to the Methodist deputation of my hostility to them,” as “bruted about with natural comments and additions,” at Kidderminster, Leeds, and many other places. Though he was by this time pretty well case-hardened, and accustomed to walk with truth “through evil as well as good repute,” yet he felt at first “perhaps too much the personal injustice done” him, “just as a cut gives a sharper pain, than a heavy weight which overbears you.” Yet even then he was chiefly “hurt by this story, because it goes to disparage religion; and though its falsehood may be proved to sensible men, it will leave a cloud behind. Is it,” he adds strikingly, “that God, knowing me to be fond of

popular favor, means thus graciously to mortify the passion? At least let me try to derive from it this benefit. I ought, however, to vindicate myself by all fair means."

Many matters of great interest engaged his attention during the remainder of the session. In the closing debate he gave utterance to his feelings on the probability of a war with America. "Deeply, sir, do I deplore the gloom which I see spreading over the western horizon; and I most earnestly trust that we are not to be involved in the misfortune of a new war, aggravated by possessing almost the character of civil strife—a war between two nations, who are children of the same family, and brothers in the same inheritance of common liberty."

His interest in America was always great. And it was not only in his place on the floor of the House of Commons that he thus expressed it. On one occasion, he enters in his diary:

"Mr. Pinkney sent me a letter which was written to him by the President of the United States, intimating a disposition to enter into negotiation with England on Abolition Enforcement questions, distinct from others; and Pinkney said that he had never had a convenient opportunity of reading it or showing it to Lord Wellesley, who was out of town all the summer, and he saw his Lordship rarely. This looks very ill. Lord! give peace to an afflicted world."

Among other entries, we find the following indication of the state of his feelings: "I find my memory failing me, partly, I doubt not, from advancing years; but this effect accelerated and exaggerated by the incessant bustle in which I have lived, and by my not taking pains to obtain sufficiently deep impressions. Let me



mind this with my children, especially with any who may seem volatile or bird-witted. I have not been watchful enough over my thoughts, and for improving the time when going from place to place, either on foot or in carriage. Let me think over some topics either with or without a pencil, and note down; or if I have no topic for thought ready on my memorandum paper, let me repeat passages in prose or verse which I wish to retain in my memory, either seriatim or topically. Let me have memoranda made to insure due attention to all my topic's stores. Oh! how much better fitted I might have been, than I am, for the duties of my station, if I had duly improved my means, especially that most important of them all, my time! O Lord! forgive me, and let not vanity be my motive in all these operations, but the desire of pleasing Thee. Again, as my memory thus fails me, let me rather read over what I already know, since I can far more easily revive into completeness ideas now fading away, than put myself into complete possession of new ones. Again, in Scripture reading, especially at night, I find often after it, only a general devout frame of mind, but no specific recollections: let me try to retain something distinctly, if only one verse, and repeat it afterward. Classification here of unspeakable use to a bad memory. *Mem.* To look over these papers frequently."

The vacation, which he spent with his family, at Herstmonceux, opened with its usual employments. "Letters my chief business. Writing a long one to-day to Mr. Roberts, vindicating myself against Mr. W.'s charge, and against his own declaration, most kindly and frankly made, of my being too hurrying and immethodical, and thereby lessening my influence."

\* Nothing could be more characteristic than the his-

tory of this correspondence. Mr. Roberts, with whom he had before no particular acquaintance, had called on him in the bustle of the session, by an appointment which had escaped Mr. Wilberforce's recollection. The rest may be told in his own words: "Wrote to Mr. Roberts, from whom I received a most frank and honest letter; too strongly charging me with deceiving people, though ascribing it to my attempting more business than I can execute. I love his frankness, and thanked him for it; yet how hardly am I used! If I do my utmost, yet if I do not succeed, or if delays happen, they are charged on me; yet I am not clear of the fault of taking more on me than I can get through, though not intentionally to blame. Of late years I have refused multitudes of things. Let this letter, and what it states of another person, who charged me with deceiving him, speaking fair, but performing nothing, though all this is false . . . yet let it be a lesson to me to avoid all appearance of evil."

Mr. Roberts, though with no such intention, had taken the shortest road to his confidence. "A friend who will frankly tell me of my faults in private," was a possession that he valued above all price. "I must spend what time remains," he says two days afterwards in his private journal, "in humiliation and prayer; but let me just put down the record of a most striking letter from Mr. Roberts of Sheffield—the most truly Christian, candid, kind, friendly remonstrance I ever remember; especially considering the erroneous views of my conduct under which he wrote. I had unhappily forgot an appointment made with him four days before; and just when raw and fresh from this instance of my negligence, he met at my door a neighbor, who charged me with the most gross misconduct, in making people

dance attendance on me, and perhaps, at last, not only deceiving, but even opposing them, etc. Yet he had the firmness and Christian spirit of love to make him not credit this, and to ascribe what ground there was for it to my undertaking more than I could execute."

"I should do violence to my own feelings," he tells Mr. Roberts, "if I did not without delay assure you solemnly, that I greatly respect your frankness on general grounds; but that still more on personal grounds I consider you as entitled to my warmest gratitude for what I must deem a signal act of friendship. Two of the best friends I have in the world, have endeared themselves to me in no small degree by the same friendly frankness. Amongst other advantages which follow from dealing thus openly, is this, that if a man be not in fault, or not in fault greatly, he has an opportunity of vindicating himself in whole or in part; or if he be in fault, he has the opportunity of acknowledging, and as far as possible of repairing it. \* \* One word for the person whom you met at my door; you will add to the obligations I owe you, if you will tell me who it is, or what the case is on which he applied to me. I can solemnly declare, that for many years I have been particularly on my guard never to excite expectations which I was not sure I could realize; but I must say public men are often used very hardly, and a person in my situation is made answerable for measures he can not control. I will strictly observe any injunctions of secrecy under which you may lay me; but conscious that I have not meant to deceive, I can not but be very anxious to exculpate myself, if it be only in your opinion, which I must say I value highly from the specimen you have given me of your character."

Mr. Roberts's reply enabled him fully to refute this

charge. "Another most kind and Christian letter," is his memorandum of it. "N. was the man who gave him that account of me. How curious! Never had any man more reason to complain of another than I of him; and because I kept back all my complaints, he goes about abusing me, and even such a man as Roberts, is the dupe of his account. Yet I am not clear that it is not more stupidity than intentional roguery." His correspondent's frankness deserved, he thought, a fuller explanation of the truth. "It is really extraordinary," he tells him in an early letter, "but I find myself opening to you with all the unreservedness of an old friend, and entering with the same confidence of friendly sympathy into my private circumstances and feelings. Frankness begets frankness. My temper is naturally, I believe, open, and you have been so kindly unreserved to me, that in return I open the window of my bosom, you will remember the allusion, as soon as with my mind's eye I see you ready to look into it."

As soon, therefore, as the leisure of his holidays allowed, he replied at length to Mr. Roberts, entering naturally into a detailed sketch of his whole life in Parliament.

"HERSTMONCEUX, NEAR BATH, *July 29, 1811.*

"MY DEAR SIR: The strong claim on my esteem and gratitude which you established by your first letter, is much augmented and confirmed by your last. I speak the real sentiments of my heart, when I assure you that I feel deeply indebted to you. How much do I wish that you had been long ere now in the habit of occasionally addressing me in the same style of friendly, and I will add, Christian, animadversion, and also, when needed, of reproof! Such communications are unspeak-

ably valuable to any public man, who wishes, on the one hand, to do his duty, and who, on the other, is sufficiently aware of the difficulty of his task, and of his own various imperfections.

“I am sorry I have not as much time at my command as I should be glad to employ in considering your letter, before I reply to it. But weeks might be spent, neither idly nor unprofitably, in discussing topics of such importance and extent. Before I enter on them, let me assure you, that your last letter, by informing me that it was N., to whom you had alluded, has afforded material relief to my mind. For, though I was conscious that I had never intentionally trifled with or deceived any one with whom I had business to transact, yet I was but too well convinced that from inadvertency or forgetfulness, arising from the multiplicity of my occupations and engagements, I had occasionally been justly culpable; (how could I be otherwise than impressed with the consciousness of this, when engaged in writing to you, in whose case such a circumstance had arisen?) and I could not foresee into what extent of apparent criminality I might not have been drawn by the same causes. By informing me, that — and — were the person and case in question, you have, therefore, I repeat it, considerably relieved me. \* \* \*

“I have spent so much time on the former part of your last letter, that the latter and more interesting part must be dispatched more briefly; and I will be honest enough to begin by confessing that I wish I could vindicate myself as satisfactorily, even to my own judgment, against the general charge, which you urge so kindly, and therefore with increased force, of a want of order and method in the general discharge of my business, and I can not deny the consequences which

you ascribe to these imperfections. I strive, and will strive still more earnestly, against them. But let it not be supposed that after this frank confession, I am seeking covertly to do away the effect of it, when I go on to remark, that though conscience compels me to plead guilty to the indictment, there is much to be alleged in extenuation, much in explanation of my offense. And before I proceed to state these particulars, let me bar any conclusions in this case, to be drawn from the last session of Parliament only; because the truth is, that about ten months ago I lost my secretary, and hence my papers have been in confusion, my letters have been unanswered, and I have been forced to spend time in writing with my own hand many which ought to have been written by my secretary, with a gain to me of the time for better purposes. But you will easily suggest to yourself, how such a cause must diffuse its effects throughout the whole of my day, and of my work. In the next place, I ought, perhaps, to mention my not having any great share of bodily strength, were it not that though this prevents my being able occasionally to work double tides, and so get through a great quantity of work in a few days on any emergency, yet my constitution has been such as to enable me, I believe, to get through on the whole as much business during six or seven months, as many far stronger persons: the inability to bear great fatigue, does, however, sometimes cause my affairs, papers, letters, etc., to fall into confusion, because I can not, after having been kept up till four or five in the morning, rise at my usual hour, and pass my time according to its ordinary system of allotments. Conscious also of this, I dare not make engagements for an early or even moderate hour in the ensuing morning, because I can not foresee how long I may

be kept up on the preceding night. This leads me to remark in the next place, that in the case of a member of Parliament, it is not merely the quantity of work which he has on his hands, but the uncertain hours he must keep, which prevents his having the full command of his time.

"And now in going on with this explanation, I find myself embarrassed by the fear of subjecting myself to the imputation of vanity and self-sufficiency, if I proceed to state particulars, which it would yet be unjust to myself to forbear mentioning. But if the great apostle of the Gentiles, when his character was called in question, felt that he was justified in speaking of his own actings and sufferings in the cause of Christ, in a manner which but for the occasion would have rendered him liable to the charge of boasting and vain-glory, I may surely, at least to your friendly ear, state concerning myself particulars which, but for the circumstance which calls them from me, ought not to proceed from my own pen. With this excuse, then let me state to you, that there is scarcely any member of Parliament who has much, or I might almost say, any private business, who attends the discussions on public questions with any thing like the same degree of regularity as myself, or who takes part so much in them. Again, there is scarcely any such member who is so generally put on the public committees, which from time to time are appointed for the dispatch of important business, for conducting delicate and important inquiries, etc. Observe, I do not put myself on these committees, but bearing in mind that I am member for Yorkshire, I own I think it right that I should be present at the agitation of all public questions of moment, and for the same reason, that I should not shrink from the attend-

ance on committees. The number of these to which I belonged during the last session was very great. Let me also state that you can scarcely conceive the prodigious amount of inconvenience which I sustain from not thinking it right to allow my servants to say, when I am within, that I am not at home, but only that I am engaged. . . . I will just state, that my scrupulousness here is not on my own account so much as on my servants'; it has been a matter of so much importance to me, as to have made me observe the effect on their minds of saying, Not at home; and I see that nine out of ten of them conceive that they are telling a falsehood for their master's convenience. How then can I afterwards speak in Scriptural terms of the guilt of lying? and will they not be likely to infer, that if they are allowed to stretch a little when it is for their master's benefit, they may do the same for their own? . . . But the inconvenience which I suffer from it is extreme. For my servants assure me, that in spite of all they can say, of my being engaged, of my not seeing persons unless they come by appointment, (Yorkshire men, however, are excepted from this rule,) people will force their way in, and then you may conceive the consequence. Indeed, I believe you have in some degree witnessed it; I say in some degree, because I doubt whether I had the pleasure of seeing you at Kensington Gore, and if not, you can little conceive how difficult it often is for me to force my way out of my own house. But though I own I might do better, and hope to do better than I have done, the above causes, with the additional circumstance of the grand evil of all, my very great correspondence, render it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to allot certain hours to certain occupations, in the degree which you perhaps sup-



pose. There is, however, still another consideration to take into the account, and a consideration of as much practical importance and operation as any that has been mentioned, and that is, my not being a party man,

“Nullius addictus jurare in verba magistri,

which surely the member for Yorkshire ought not to be; for as I have no such easy principle to decide my vote, in nine cases out of ten at least, as that of the side of the House from which the motion proceeds, but profess to take my part on every question according to my own unbiassed judgment, much reading is necessary, much reflection, much talking matters over with able and impartial friends, when facts are brought forward, concessions made, etc., which do not appear in public debates. The questions on which we have to decide are often, believe me, of great nicety; on which, if a man will give a fair hearing to all that is to be urged on both sides, he will own it is very hard to judge which of the two scales preponderates. I must add, by the way, that you are not to estimate the attention I pay, nay, the share I take, in public debates and conversations, by what you see in the newspapers; for belonging to no party, I am naturally, as well as on other accounts, very unpopular with the reporters, who are always strong on one side or the other. Hence I am often left entirely out, and more frequently dismissed with a much shorter account of what I have said, than is given of what comes from other speakers. . . . The evil of which I am here speaking, if it affected myself only, would scarcely deserve to be noticed; but considered in its general operation, as it tends to aggravate party violence, to produce a disposition to cultivate the favor of the reporters, instances of which I have

seen in men who might have been supposed incapable of such servility, to destroy, in short, all independence of principle and character—viewed in these and other consequences, the evils arising from the partial and unfair way in which our debates are now reported, and more especially in which any neutral, particularly if he is supposed to be unreasonably religious, is treated, are of the very first importance, and tend, as I really fear, to the ruin of our country.

“But I have been led away, though not unnaturally, into this general discussion. I will finish this train of egotisms, of which I really am heartily ashamed, by stating that my irregularity does not proceed from my having less time to give to parliamentary business from social engagements, domestic comforts, other occupations, etc., for I make all other business bend and give way to that of Parliament. I refuse all invitations for days on which the House sits. I commonly attend all the debate, instead of going away after the private business is over for two or three hours, and coming down again after a comfortable dinner; on the contrary, I snatch a hasty meal, as I may, before the public business begins, in the short interval sometimes between the end of the private and the beginning of the public. I see little or nothing of my family during the session of Parliament, (though, blessed be God, of a more tender, excellent wife, no man ever received ‘the gift from the Lord,’ you know the quotation,) and I have staid till the very end of the session, I believe, every year of the last twenty-three or twenty-four. This very year, I had gone down to my family, when the new business which so unexpectedly sprung up, gave a call, to which I did not turn a deaf ear. Now, my dear sir, once more I assure you, I am ashamed of myself for running on thus.

“But that which I account the part of my public conduct in which I have acted the most faithfully by my constituents, and in a manner the most becoming the member for the first county in England, is my not having rendered the situation the means of benefiting my relatives . . of whom I have had several with large families reduced from great affluence to entire destitution by commercial misfortunes . . or connections, or friends; nor still more, the means of aggrandizing myself, or my family, or rather, which was the greater temptation to me, of securing a quiet seat in the legislature of my country, exempt from expense, trouble, or risk, and which would have allowed me to attend as much or as little as I liked, without impropriety. This, I dare say, has never struck you; but when you consider on the one hand, that more than half of the present House of Lords has been created or gifted with their titles (excluding all hereditary descent) since I came into Parliament, and on the other, that my intimacy with Mr. Pitt for so many years, may be supposed to have rendered it not difficult for me to obtain such an elevation, you may assign more weight to this circumstance, than at first sight might appear to you to be due to it. I remember Mr. Cobbett commenting on this subject with his usual fairness observed, that my pride was more gratified by being M. P. for Yorkshire, than by receiving a peerage from any minister; and I will not deny all force to the remark; but I can assure him, that this pride would never have had the effect of preventing my accepting a seat in the House of Lords—they were principles of a very different and far higher order which produced that operation.

“And thus for the first, and let me hope for the last time, finding myself in a rural retirement at a friend’s

house, where I could scribble on with little interruption, I have suffered myself by your friendly expostulation to be drawn into this exposure of the real sentiments of my heart, respecting my parliamentary conduct. But after all I have been led into saying in my own favor, I ought in fairness to add, that I am myself conscious of many, many imperfections, and defects, and errors; of more perhaps than are known by any other person; though I can truly declare that they have not been caused by my sacrificing a sense of public duty to my own personal advantage, or, I will add, personal gratification. I will also confess my fear lest from the infirmities of age beginning to appear, (for though I am not quite fifty-two, a man's age is not to be always measured by the number of his years,) there have been more imperfections within the last year or two, than formerly—the memory first declines, and in my intercourse with you there was a notable instance of its being defective. Let me not forget to assure you that I consider myself, in all that I have been saying, not so much defending myself against the accusation you brought against me, as against that which I brought against myself—that to which I was conscious I must appear justly subject, in the judgment of fair and unprejudiced observers. I should not, however, though I have been so insensibly drawn on into pouring forth the unrestrained effusions of my heart as they have flowed forth without preparation or arrangement, I should not, I think, send off such a mass of egotisms, (as I must again style what I have been writing,) if the friendly frankness with which you addressed me, had not made me feel that I could open to you the whole interior of my mind. Once more I thank you from the bottom of my soul for the friendly and

Christian freedom which you have exercised towards me.

“The postman is come. He departs hence, most inconveniently for me, at a very early hour ; and to save a day I will send off this letter without reading it over ; it will at least show, that I wish to stand well in your estimation—you have, in fact, convinced me, that you form your judgment of men with an observing, and at the same time a candid, eye. But after all, it is of little real importance what judgment is formed of us by our fellow-creatures. To obtain the approbation of the man within the breast, as conscience has been well called, should be our object, and to seek for that true honor which cometh from God. Believe me, with real esteem and regard, my dear sir,

“Your obliged and faithful,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

## CHAPTER XXVIII.

THE alarming illness of the King rendering a dissolution of Parliament and consequent new election probable, called him at this time to an immediate decision upon a most important question, suggested to him by that consciousness of failing memory which he expresses in this letter, as well as by the earnest advice of some of his most confidential friends. "I am thinking just now, whether or not to give up the county of York: it is a most serious question: may God direct me right in it. I can truly say, that if I knew which was the right path, I would follow in it."

"His great humility disposed him," his sons remark, "as has been already said, to defer too much to the judgment of his friends; yet this was more perhaps in appearance than in truth. It led him indeed to seek their counsel with unusual freedom, and to weigh it with proportionate anxiety, and thus sometimes gave to a suspended judgment the appearance of a want of resolution; but on all important points he at last acted on his own convictions." Yet whilst forming his own judgment, he was often "much embarrassed by the conflicting advice of friends—Babington strong for absolute retiring—Stephen, and others, for giving up Yorkshire—but Grant and Henry Thornton against my quitting the county."

He enters in his journal an extended survey of the various reasons which should influence him on either side of the question, and on occasion of entering on his fifty-third year, says: "I had wished to spend my birth-day in religious exercises, but I can not. I have some very urgent African, and other business. \* \* \* \* Oh! let me not omit the duty of praise and thanksgiving. Who was ever so loudly called on to perform it? Who has been so highly favored? Surely when I look over in detail for the last forty years, (Deut. 8:2) the course of my heart and life; when I call to mind what I have been, and what God has done for me, and by me; when I sum up all together, and recollect that consideration which should never be forgotten, that all the past, present, and to come, are under the view of God in lively colors, I am lost in astonishment, and can only exclaim: 'Thy ways are not as our ways, nor Thy thoughts as our thoughts.' I will try to look back through my past life, and to affect my heart as by the review it ought to be, with humiliation, gratitude, love, and confidence, mixed with reverential fear. And oh! I must adopt the words of Ezekiel 16:63: 'That thou mayest remember and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified towards thee, (poor old Newton's story,) for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God.'"

The necessity for attention to the education of his family, his oldest son being now thirteen years of age, the state of "body and mind, especially the latter, intimating to me the solve senescentem—particularly my memory, of the failure of which I find decisive proofs continually; at present I can retire incolumi famâ, and that is much," are all noted as having their due weight in his conference with himself, on this subject. He en-

ters freely into the discussion of it in his letters to his friends, at this period; but as the dissolution did not take place, he was not called on to act in the premises. This question, fully as he entered into it, was far from monopolizing his attention, and he complains of being robbed of his usual holiday leisure for literary enjoyment, by the attention he was obliged to give to the state of the negroes in the colonies, and numerous private cases which were pressed upon his attention as one who, himself a man, thought nothing belonging to a common humanity foreign to his attention.

The next two months were spent by Mr. Wilberforce in paying, with his family, some long-promised visits. Signs of thankfulness to God, and love to man, mark every halt along his route. "Elmdon, Sunday, Sept. 29. Walked a little with Cowper—the beautiful end of the sixth book—‘the promised Sabbath.’ What a prospect! Oh! the unspeakable mercies of God! what can I desire which He has not granted me? And then when I compare my state with that of all the rest of the world, in other countries, and even in this little oasis of security, and prosperity, and peace! Oh! that I were more grateful! Oh! let me strive more to love God and Christ, to delight in them, and be grateful to them in some proportion to what I ought." "Off for Lord G.'s, where very kindly received. It is a fine place, and improved with great taste. Their kind compulsion kept us over another day. Lord G. very pleasing and friendly, but these fine houses do not suit me. Surely they see too little of their children. Alas! I fear I did little good. Resolved to take opportunity from a conversation we had at N., to write to Lord G., to press on him the reading of St. Paul's writings. Oh! may the effect be blessed! He is of a sweet disposi-



tion, and most superior understanding. Alas! how unspeakable are his disadvantages, and how much does he suffer from high life! How thankful should I be for having a wife who is not of the fashionable sort! How thankful for my not having been made a peer in earlier life! It would, humanly speaking, have been the ruin of my children, if not of myself." "Finishing in the evening a letter of Alexander Knox's, of fine imagination, rich in thought, and beautiful in language; ingenious, too, and devotional, but yet fanciful, and full of guesses and subtleties leading to dangerous practical errors, or rather perhaps arising out of them, and then lending their filial support."

The Christmas holidays brought his two school-boys home, and all his six children were gathered round him—"A true family party," but "how sadly do I feel my own exceeding incompetency to the work of education! O Lord! to Thee do I flee. Thou hast promised wisdom to them that ask it sincerely; grant it then to me, that I may be kind and cheerful, and yet steady with my young ones." He was at this time laboring under a distressing oppression on the chest which for some weeks almost deprived him of his voice. Yet was he striving to make their home cheerful to his children. "It is of great importance to preserve boys' affections, and prevent their thinking home a dull place." "R.'s birth-day, so they had their play of King and Queen, in my court-dresses—in the evening, chess. Evening, air-pump, and Southey's Curse of Kehama—imagination wild as the winds—prodigious command of language, and the moral purity truly sublime—the finest ideas all taken from the Scriptures." "Oh! what a consideration is it, that magnificent as are the visions of glory in which Southey's fancy revels, and which his

creative genius forms, they are all beneath the simple reality of the Christian's hope, if he be but duly impressed with it! May the eyes of my understanding be enlightened, that I may know what is the hope of His calling, and what the riches of His glorious inheritance. Amen."

On Saturday, "William Allen, the Quaker, dined with us by three; and soon after dinner, till half-past eight, showed us galvanic and chemical wonders." "How truly edifying," he continues in that tone of hearty praise which sprung ever readily from his habitual humility, "to see such a man's goings-on! Though so attached to science, in a large business, and so busy at Lancaster's schools, lecturing at Guy's publicly—he attends all charitable meetings where needed, and assigned as a reason why he could not attend us on Monday, that he must be at the meeting for distributing soup at Spital Fields from six to nine. Thus can he contract into the smallest dimensions, or expand into the largest, for beneficent purposes."

The new year opened with his usual song of praise. "Oh! what mercies have I to acknowledge during the past year! Surely it is a solemn season, but I go to prayer; only let me put down my gratitude and humiliation. I must especially try to husband time more. O Lord! enable me to redeem it! I must try to keep an account of time and work, to take security against trifling." "I have been detained long at church," he tells Dr. Coulthurst, "according to a custom which I have observed for twenty-six or twenty-seven years, of devoting the new year to God by public worship in a sacrament on the 1st of January—but you shall hear from me to-morrow; and at this season, when it is usual for friends to interchange good wishes, accept the as-

surance of my best remembrances and kindest wishes for yourself and all that are dear to you for time and for eternity."

An illness, affecting seriously his voice, caused his friends much anxiety at this time; and by the advice of his physician, he omitted his usual attendance in the House of Commons.

The approaching crisis with America filled him with uneasiness. "There seems real reason to fear a war with America, yet honest Butterworth's correspondents say that we need not heed the war-cry, as being only meant to intimidate. It may be so; but nine times out of ten it is a game at brag, wherein each party depends upon the giving way of the other, or would not himself push on so warmly. Alas! alas! Feb. 3d. Bankes thinks with me that there is no chance of the Prince's changing the ministry, or consequently of a speedy dissolution, but we both fear an American war. I am wanting my voice much, that I may plead the cause of Christianity in India, and soften the asperity of hostile tempers between Great Britain and America." "I am so much affected," he tells Mr. Babington, "by the probability of a war with America, that I am strongly disposed to go to the House, if Whitbread brings on this motion,\* that I may declare the grief and pain with which the very thought of a war with America fills my heart. I have often thought that we have not enough borne in mind that the people of America have a great influence over their government, and that their thinking that a great number of people in this country feel for them might tend to allay irritation, even if a war should break out." Mr. Whitbread's motion came on upon the 12th of February,

\* For the correspondence between the two governments.

and after "thinking a little about American question in the morning—went down to the House for the first time this session. People kindly welcomed me—I spoke for about twenty minutes without suffering in voice, and very well heard. Whitbread angry at me for voting and speaking against him, and very rough and rude. He seemed himself to think so, for he came up next day and talked with me some time, saying how much he had been disappointed by my going against him. Yet all our set voted with me—much misrepresented in the *Morning Chronicle*, next day. I went against my wife's remonstrance, to soften and prevent irritation."

To his friends in the country he thus explains the motives of his conduct.

*To S. Roberts, Esq.*

"NEAR LONDON, Feb. 15, 1812.

"MY DEAR SIR: My complaint has been much more serious, and has hung on me far longer than I expected. I thank God, I am convalescent, I hope, though not well. But on Thursday last, the great anxiety I felt, and indeed continue to feel, on the American question, carried me to the House of Commons much sooner than perhaps was prudent: and really I have been as usual so misrepresented and traduced in the newspaper reports of the debates, that I almost regret my not having staid away. It is a satisfaction to me, however, to reflect, that I went for the purpose of soothing any irritation which might arise, and of preventing any mischievous discussions. I have not time to be at all particular, but I can assure you, had Whitbread's motion been complied with, and the various particulars

mentioned in the correspondence between the British and American ministers come into discussion, the most acrimonious debates, and the strongest charges (and I must say, well-founded charges in some instances) against the American government, and its representative, General Armstrong, must have come forward.

"Again, I fear there is too much cause for apprehending, that the American government, finding its threatening language produce the effect of making our Parliament take the negotiation into its own hands, would conceive that it need only go on threatening with increased warmth, to insure our conceding all it should require; whereas, I know it would thereby call forth a spirit of a directly opposite kind in many of our country gentlemen, as well as in government, and would consequently produce the rupture which I so greatly deprecate. But I must say farewell; and believe me, with esteem and regard, my dear sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"W. WILHERFORCE."

The other great cause which he "wanted voice to plead," and which eighteen years before he had pressed so earnestly on Parliament, was brought on at this time by the approaching expiration of the East-India Company's charter. He was most anxious that the Church should assume her proper station in this noble undertaking, of diffusing the blessings of Christianity, and was therefore "trying to keep back the Dissenters and Methodists, until the Church fairly come forward, from fear that if the sectaries begin, the Church will not follow. I wish them, therefore, to delay applying to the Legislature, for instructing the East-Indians, or for the repeal of the Conventicle Act, which they are about to

attempt in consequence of the judgment of the King's Bench, that a man must be a teacher of a separate congregation."

He was himself endeavoring to arouse the Church; "setting hard to work on a paper for the *Christian Observer*, urging clergymen to come forward and press the communication of Christian light to the natives of India;" and using freely in all directions his own personal influence.

"I am sadly disappointed," he says a week later, "in finding even religious people so cold about the East-Indian Instruction. Partly produced, I think, by the sectaries having had a notion that the Church of England to be established. Alas! alas! let us have some substance before we differ about form."

Public affairs meanwhile were of a highly interesting character. "29th. Mr. Alexander Baring came at one, by appointment, to talk of Orders in Council and licenses, till four. The scales doubtful; but if an American war certain, provided the Orders are retained, *that* makes them preponderate." "I never was a warm friend to those measures; or rather no friend at all, but an enemy to parts of them. I am sick at heart from the sad prospect of a war with America."

## CHAPTER XXIX.

HE was now leading his usual London life; constant in the House, full of all plans for public or private charity, and showing to others no symptom of the decay which he suspected in himself. One "day at home writing and correcting a paper about Danish confiscation;" then "to Rose at the Council Office with Latrobe about the Moravian missionaries in Greenland," or "all the afternoon busy about setting up a dispensary for our neighborhood," and "waiting on the Duke of York, to ask him to be patron of it. He very obliging and civil, and consented"—an amiable trait in his Royal Highness towards a conscientious opponent, which he always loved to mention. In the House he spoke more than once upon the system of punishments in the army, "enforcing my argument that no flogging but by general court martial."

Another cause to which he freely gave his time and thoughts, was the welfare of the different religious societies. Most of them he had seen arise around him since his entrance into public life; for they owed their origin to the increased attention to religion, which was in great measure the fruit of his exertions. When he was most occupied this spring, he still found time to attend the "general meeting of the Church Missionary Society for Africa, and the East. A grand assemblage—

I spoke with acceptance. It went off well." "African and Asiatic Society's dinner—took the chair. Then House, where sat late. May 6th. British and Foreign Bible Society, annual meeting—all went off admirably. Immense meeting—I spoke with acceptance—several bishops present."

The meeting of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, led to some important consequences. To the committee then appointed, Mr. Wilberforce transmitted Dr. Buchanan's sketch for an ecclesiastical establishment in India, which they embodied in their resolutions; and thus the first great steps were taken which led to the appointment of the Indian bishoprics.

In the midst of these peaceful occupations he was startled by a shock which was felt throughout the kingdom. On Monday, May 11th, some friends had been breakfasting with him to talk over the East-Indian question, and then "considering the question of sinecures preparatory to the third reading of Bankes's bill for their abolition. Late in town. Stopped to dine at Babington's at half-past four. Babington (who was chairman of the Committee on the Orders in Council) at the examination, which began at four, when he returned to us (Henry Thornton, Mrs. Babington, etc.) about a quarter to five, greatly agitated, stating that Perceval, at the time Prime Minister, had been shot dead in the lobby. We could scarce believe it. I went, after calling at Perceval's, and Arbuthnot's, who quite overwhelmed, to the House, to the Prison-rooms, where the poor wretch Bellingham [was, they were] examining him. I carefully perused his face for some time, close to him—a striking face: at times he shed tears, or had shed them; but strikingly composed and mild, though haggard. Called William Smith's, who



close to Perceval when he dropped, and who thought it was myself, till he looked in the face. Smith, with another, carried him into the Secretary's room. Poor Lord Arden quite wild with grief, saying : ' No, I know he is not here, he is gone to a better world.' " The next day he went " early to town to the Speaker's by whom summoned about the proposition to be made for the provision for poor Perceval's family."

" Perceval," he says in his private diary, " had the sweetest of all possible tempers, and was one of the most conscientious men I ever knew; the most instinctively obedient to the dictates of conscience, the least disposed to give pain to others, the most charitable and truly kind and generous creature I ever knew. He offered me at once a thousand pounds for paying Pitt's debts, though not originally brought forward by Pitt, and going out of office with a great family." " Oh! wonderful power of Christianity!" he adds upon the following Sunday. " Never can it have been seen, since our Saviour prayed for His murderers, in a more lovely form than in the conduct and emotions it has produced in several on the occasion of poor dear Perceval's death. Stephen, who had at first been so much overcome by the stroke, had been this morning, I found, praying for the wretched murderer, and thinking that his being known to be a friend of Perceval's might affect him, he went and devoted himself to trying to bring him to repentance. He found honest Butterworth trying to get admittance, and obtained it for him and Mr. Daniel Wilson, whom at my recommendation he had brought with him. The poor creature was much affected, and very humble and thankful, but spoke of himself as unfortunate rather than guilty, and said it was a necessary thing—strange perversion—no

malice against Perceval. Poor Mrs. Perceval, after the first, grew very moderate and resigned, and with all her children knelt down by the body, and prayed for them and for the murderer's forgiveness. O wonderful power of Christianity! Is this the same person who could not bear to have him opposed by any one?"

To Mr. Hey he at this time thus opened his mind.

"LONDON, *May 15th*, 1812.

"MY DEAR SIR: Alas! into what times are we thrown! I can not help thinking I see the source of that savage spirit which prevails so much. The reverence for authority, and law, and rank, and high station, has been effaced from the minds of the lower orders; and where the fear of God has no place, the consequence is that all control is withdrawn from the bad passions of men. To this cause I think may be added the modern system of making expediency the basis of morals and the spring of action, instead of the domestic and social affections and the relations of life and the duties arising out of them. Not that the lower orders understand this generalizing abstract way of thinking and feeling; but the opinions and emotions which are taught and imbibed in this school, receiving their stamp in the mint of the higher orders, if I may so express it, obtain a currency throughout the inferior classes of society. I trust we are introducing the true remedy, indeed, the only remedy of our diseased nature, by teaching the mass of our people the knowledge of the Scriptures. Surely it is an indication of the favor of the Almighty, that we have been enabled to spread so extensively the system of education. I must also ascribe much to the seditious publications which have been circulated so industriously.

"It is no small pleasure to me to believe that Mr. Perceval had an habitual desire to please God; and I doubt not he looked to Him with unfeigned humiliation, through the Redeemer. It is really an honor to our House, that his private virtues were so generally recognized among us. How much I wish that I may not hear that in our county the account of Mr. P.'s death, and of the horrid circumstances which attended it, was received with joy and exultation, as in Nottingham, Leicester, and I fear other places! Well, my dear sir, 'there remaineth a rest,' and pray for me and mine, that we may enter into it after the short voyage of this stormy and tempestuous life. With kind remembrances to all your family,

"I remain, my dear sir,

"Ever your sincere friend,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

In the midst of all the public bustle and political contention which followed the death of Mr. Perceval, growing out of the difficulty the Prince Regent experienced in forming a ministry, about which Mr. W. was consulted by Mr. Canning on the course it was best for him to pursue, it is most refreshing to turn from the entries of his busy nights and hurried days to the record of his inner feelings. He was separated from his family, and his letters to them breathe the simplest and most natural affection. The troubled gusts of politics never ruffled its peaceful current. "I feel," he tells his sister, "as if I were unkind in never writing to you, and I have often thought of doing it. But every day brings with it claims upon my time far beyond my powers of satisfying them. Yet nothing can

ever prevent my having at liberty for your use my kindest thoughts and affections."

"For once," he tells Mrs. Wilberforce, who was travelling with his children to the coast, "I rejoice in an east wind, since I recollect that it will meet you and prevent your all suffering from the heat. . . . In comes John Villiers, and he has released me only by my absolutely forcing him out at half-past three, and I ought to have gone to town an hour ago. . . . I have been sitting under the trees reading and writing. The only part of the garden which I did not enjoy, was one to which I went purposely to see how all looked—the children's gardens. Even the fullest exuberance of summer beauties could not supply the want of animal life. Barbara's gum-cistus is in high beauty, and the roses in full bloom. My own room produces something of the same melancholy sensation as the children's gardens; but I am going to dine at Babington's to meet Mr. Robert Hall, (the Dissenting minister,) whose shyness is such that he could not bring himself to come to me, though, hearing that he wished to see me, I wrote him a long letter to banish all such feelings, and settle about our meeting."

On the Sunday following, he writes again from Broomfield, where he was passing one day with Mr. William Hoare. "After having dated my letter, I need not inform you that the various rooms of this house, and walks of this place, call up many interesting recollections in which you all have the principal share. It was impossible for the main features of the place to be ever changed. The walk under the oaks, and the opposite close one—the various rooms, etc. . . . I hope I do not look back on the past scenes without some of that gratitude which they justly claim in overflowing measure.

I am but poorly to-day, and have been robbed of the portion of time which I value more in common than any other in the whole week—that I mean which elapses between returning from church and dinner.”

His affections were naturally lively, but it was not to this only that he owed the preservation, all through his busy life, of their early morning freshness. This was the reward of self-discipline and watchfulness; of that high value for the house of God, and the hours of secret meditation, which made his Sundays cool down his mind and allay the rising fever of political excitement. Sunday turned all his feelings into a new channel. His letters were put aside, and all thoughts of business banished. To the closest observer of his private hours he seemed throughout the day as free from all the feelings of a politician, as if he had never mixed in the busy scenes of public life. Thus at this time he says: “I have been much affected by hearing old Scott of the Lock for the first time these many years. The beginning of his sermon . . . ‘I have been young, and now am old’ . . . that twenty-seven years ago he preached for the first time in that chapel, was remarkably applicable to me; for then I first heard him at the beginning of my Christian course. Oh! how truly may I say, that goodness and mercy follow me! And may I not hope that my being thus humiliated is a sign that the Saviour is knocking at the door of my heart, and that I am ready to let him in?”

His spirit was kept unruffled by all the exasperating influences of the life he led; whilst he walked safely, with a cheerful seriousness and disengaged affections, in the heated and infectious air of public life—in the world, but most truly not of the world—ever remembering the end. “How will all this busy and tumult-

uous world appear to have been all one great Bedlam when we look back on it from a future state!"

"What a blessing," he says, "is a cheerful temper! I felt most keenly ——'s behavior about Bowdler, and his not coming to me; but for his sake, and I hope from Christian principles, I resolved to struggle against bad temper about it, and now all is over."

The summer was far advanced before Mr. Wilberforce got off from London, "holding it a duty to stay till the last." He reached Sandgate, a sea-side resort, upon the 29th of July, and resumed his usual summer occupations. "My first employment must be writing—to clear away an immense arrear of unanswered letters and unread papers." "Besides the mass of trash, I have letters for Europe, Asia, Africa, and America."

Here he was exposed to few external interruptions, and was therefore able to devote more time than usual to his children, whilst he indulged in "a little miscellaneous reading. Sometimes parts of the Reviews, or poetry, Heber's Palestine, The Lady of the Lake;" and took part in "the general reading of the family—Rollin and Shakspeare. This afternoon in walking, I ran over for an hour The Vicar of Wakefield. What an utter ignorance does it indicate of true Christianity! Morality is its main vital principle; yet the story, though strangely unnatural, is beautifully told, and inimitably interesting."

To these employments must be added attempts to benefit his temporary neighbors. It was one of his first cares to form an accurate estimate of the moral and religious state of the surrounding population. At Sandgate he found much to regret. "It is grievous," he laments to Mr. Stephen, "to see this place—hot and cold sea-baths, library, billiard-table, ponies, donkeys,

every thing but a church, or chapel, or any thing of the kind, though it is a sort of preserve of the Archbishop's. There is not even a Sunday-school. We are trying to get something of the kind set on foot." He was almost disqualified by feeble health from personal exertions in visiting the poor; yet what he could, he did, even in this way; stopping often in his solitary walks to drop some word of wisdom for those who casually met him. . . . "Thursday: walking early, met a boy aged fourteen, John Russell, who can not read, and utterly ignorant of religion—did not know what would become of us hereafter—may this meeting be for good." . . . Upon those whose circumstances made it possible, he continually pressed the happiness and duty of thus ministering to their wants. "Miss E.," he says this spring, "now going on admirably. Her health and spirits improved, and she very active amongst the cottagers, doing them good. A most useful lesson taught by this; that the best course when any one is low-spirited and distressed with anxieties, is to set them to action in doing good to others. Trust thou in the Lord, and be doing good."

## CHAPTER XXX.

ONE important subject now pressed for instant decision. Lord Sidmouth had privately informed him that an immediate dissolution of Parliament was at hand; and the time was therefore come, when he must make up his mind to retain or to resign the representation of his county. "I shrink," he says, when weighing all the arguments upon the subject, "from absolutely deciding to resign my situation, as from annihilation. Yet my judgment commends it more and more; and it is not annihilation if I stay in the House, though not for Yorkshire. May the Lord guide me aright. The urgent claims of my children upon my thoughts, time, and superintendence, strongly enforce my relinquishment, and are the deciding consideration. My declining health and memory seem improved; but I ought not to be an occasional attendant on Parliament if M.P. for Yorkshire. O Lord! give me wisdom to guide me rightly. I mean to spend a day in religious exercises, and to make this with my children the great objects with God." His decision was soon made, and was announced in the following letter:

*To Charles Duncombe, Esq., Duncombe Park, Yorkshire.*

"SANDGATE, NEAR FOLKSTONE, Sept. 8, 1812.

"MY DEAR DUNCOMBE: After much serious consideration, I have at last made up my mind on the im-



portant point on which I wrote to you some time ago—I have resolved to resign that high station with which the kind partiality of my Yorkshire friends has so long honored me, and in which you have yourself so kindly, and actively, and perseveringly contributed to place me. The truth is, that I find I must either continue to allot less time and thought to my family than it justly claims, or that I must cease to be a constant and assiduous member of Parliament, which I am sure I ought to be if I undertake so serious and weighty a trust as that of the representative of the county of York.

“ Yet I will fairly own to you, that it is not altogether without difficulty that I have brought myself to form this determination ; but my judgment being clear, and that after much and long reflection, (for it is more than a year that this plan has been in contemplation,) and my own opinion being confirmed by those of several of my best friends, I ought no longer to hesitate ; and having come to a decision, you are the first person to whom I communicate it. The probability of a dissolution of Parliament in the ensuing autumn is so strong, that it seemed right for me to make up my mind ; and I will own to you that I wish it to appear clear that I am not influenced in my judgment by the fear of an opposition, of which, if I were to offer myself, I am clear there would be no probability. The higher orders are not liable to sudden changes of their opinions in cases of this sort, and I have every reason to believe (some which no one, almost, knows but myself, but which would be of very powerful operation) that I should be warmly supported by the great body of the clothiers. I hope you will not suspect me of not estimating at their due amount the trouble and expense which another contest would occasion to my support-

ers ; but I own, that if I believed there were in a certain quarter any design to oppose me, that very circumstance would produce in me so strong a disposition to stand my ground, that I should find it very hard work to force myself to retire, if I could do it at all—not, believe me, from personal motives, though I dare not affirm that they would not mix, but because I should no longer think it my duty so to do ; for believing that four fifths at least of the freeholders are friendly to me, I could not bear the idea of a member, be he who he may, being forced upon our great county by the one fifth of the freeholders, against the sense of the other four parts, merely by the dread of the expense of a contest ; which our experience in 1807 proves may be carried on for a sum by no means difficult to be raised in our county, without pressing too heavily on the candidate himself.

“ But it is in confidence that to your private ear I thus whisper my secret feelings, and as strictly secret I beg you will consider what I have said. Though I have consulted none but very particular friends, I can not but suspect that there has been some leaky vessel, and that hence has arisen that abominable report of a compromise between Mr. H. Lascelles and myself, which would have been highly dishonorable to us both, though far more so to me than to him. Several friends, however, on whose judgments I place great reliance, are so earnest with me not to quit Parliament altogether, that I have agreed to accept the very kind offer of a dear friend, and through marriage a near relation, which will probably place me in a seat in which my occasional attendance in the House of Commons will not be inconsistent with other claims. But let this also be strictly *entre nous* at present. I am doubtful as to the proper

time of announcing my intended resignation publicly, and shall be glad of your opinion on that head, on which I mean also to consult Creyke, and another friend or two. If the dissolution of Parliament should seem really likely, or pretty certainly to take place, it might, and I conceive would, become right for me to declare my intention without further loss of time; but if we seem likely to live through another session, the declaration might this year be premature. I can not conclude without thanking you most cordially for all the kindness which I have experienced from you during my connection with York: for though I am not vain, or rather foolish enough to ascribe your support to personal motives, which, indeed, would be a supposition dishonorable to yourself, yet I should be void of all gratitude if its emotions were not called forth by the long course of continued good offices with which you have favored me. Let me again, however, earnestly request, that all I have said may be at present considered as strictly confidential.

“Let me beg you to present my own and Mrs. W.’s kind remembrances to Lady Charlotte, who, with all the family, I hope is well, and to believe me, my dear D., with real regard,

“Yours very sincerely,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

His intentions did not long remain a secret. So soon as he heard from good authority that Parliament was about to be dissolved, he sent “his resigning advertisement.” “I humbly trust that I have done right; but I can not say that I do not feel a good deal. Surely it is much to quit such a situation with a high character, and with the wishes of friends that I should retain it.

I go to prayer. My heart is deceitful, I scarcely know myself what it wishes, still my judgment is for Bramber."

This unexpected announcement was very variously received. Those who had witnessed the amount of labor which his sense of duty had long imposed upon him, and compared it with the powers of his slight frame and tender health, rejoiced in his decision.

His Yorkshire friends, almost to a man, lamented it. "You can not be ignorant," writes one of them, "that by the nation in general you are looked up to as the advocate of religion amongst the higher orders of society, and particularly in that legislative assembly, of which, happily for this country, you have so long been a conspicuous and efficient member."

The applause which he feared to seem to seek, followed him into his retirement. The county at large on the day of nomination, recorded solemnly their judgment of his character in an enthusiastic vote of their unanimous thanks; and his own town of Hull followed with a similar memorial of affection.

In the following fragment of his own dictation, his long and singular connection with the county is reviewed.

"Surely if I can not but look back upon the circumstances which attended the first formation of my connection with the county of York without recognizing the traces of providential guidance, neither can I forbear to acknowledge the same gracious favor in my having so long continued in my honorable station. May I not well wonder that in a county accustomed to so much attention from its members, so much that was likely to give offense should be endured in me without the slightest expression of disapprobation? My reli-

gious character and habits might alone be expected to produce disgust. My never attending the county races, or even the assizes ; my never cultivating the personal acquaintance of the nobility and gentry, (an omission which would have been culpable, but for the expenditure it would have occasioned of time which I wanted for important purposes ;) my seldom visiting the county, sometimes not going into it for several years together ; all these might fairly have been expected to have alienated from me the good-will of the freeholders ; yet it never produced this effect, and I have every reason to believe that I never should have experienced another opposition. But I began to perceive traces of infirmity, which, from considerations alike of duty and prudence, determined me to retire from my dignified station, and to accept the friendly offer of a seat in Parliament which would absolve me from the obligation of constant attendance.

“Several of my Yorkshire friends were for the first time dissatisfied with me ; and the letters which I received from various quarters, were such as could not but be gratifying to any liberal mind. And here I can not forbear mentioning a trifling anecdote, which is not without importance in the proof it affords that the general course of a public man may be approved by many who may not concur with him in his political opinions. On my way to the House of Commons one day, soon after my having exchanged my seat for Yorkshire for the borough of Bramber, I met Mr. Sheridan. After we had exchanged salutations, ‘Do you know,’ said he, ‘that I was near writing to you some little time ago ?’ On my asking the occasion of his intended letter, ‘Why,’ said he, ‘I read in the newspaper your Farewell Address to the Freeholders of Yorkshire, and

though you and I have not much agreed in our votes in the House of Commons, yet I thought the independent part you acted would render your retirement from Parliament a public loss. I was about, therefore, to write to you, to enforce on you the propriety of reconsidering your determination to retire, as I supposed, from public life, when I was informed that you were to come into Parliament for Bramber; this information made me lay aside my intention.’”

His motives for retiring from the representation of Yorkshire, were not understood by many, and he was pressed to allow himself to be nominated as a candidate for many prominent places; and even from Yorkshire he received many urgent requests to withdraw his resignation. The representation of a borough left him at liberty to follow the dictates of his own judgment as to the amount of attendance in the House which it might be necessary for him to give, and that of Bramber being in the gift of Lord Calthorpe, a near relative of Mrs. Wilberforce, he was returned as its representative.

His Sandgate retirement was soon interrupted by the conclusion of his children's holidays; as he wished himself to place one of his boys with a new tutor in Leicestershire. “On Friday last,” he tells Lord Muncaster, “I set out from Sandgate with my two boys, to convey them to their respective places of education.”

This journey is a good illustration of his parental tenderness. “I had resolved,” he writes to Mrs. Wilberforce, from Leicestershire, “to set my face toward Cambridge this very day; but at length I thought it better (after a rumination on my pillow when I lay awake against my will, thinking of dear —, who lay in a little bed by my side fast asleep, and whom I conceived I was about to leave for *good*) to return southward. I feel so

nervous about leaving him, that, but for shame, I think I should bring him back again." "After having prayed with —, and had a *tête-à-tête* with Mrs. —, I set off for Leicester. Poor dear boy, he was much affected at parting with me, turning round and bursting into tears, first quietly, and afterwards with sobs. I was near crying too, as I said to Mrs. —: 'I must get off, or else—' But she, I trust, will watch over him with Christian care."

Another incident on this journey must stand in his own words. "I am much grieved at having yesterday passed by, without stopping, a man in a ditch by the road-side between Barnet and London, whom two or three gentlemen were attending to. The Leeds coach, with the back seats empty, was just behind, and multitudes of passengers, so that help could not be wanted; yet it was wrong in all respects to pass by. It is an adjudged case since the Good Samaritan parable—at which I should have been instinctively prompt. It was not hardness of heart, I believe, either. I was busy hearing Bowdler's paper upon Dugald Stewart, and I was flurried by the Leeds coach, on the outside of which were people who, I thought, knew me; yet, if so, it was worse—not glorifying God, etc. Lord, forgive me, forgive me! I felt (and now condemn it) more, that to-day is the anniversary (Oct. 25th) of my escape from drowning in the Avon, by a most providential suggestion." So little had thirty-two years of public life hardened his affections, or blunted a most tender conscience.

On the 26th of October he was again at Sandgate, and purposing to "set apart a day for devotional exercises, in which my main objects will be divine guidance and blessing as to my children, and for a blessing on my

new plan of life. For guidance and strength to walk in the right path. Oh! what cause have I for gratitude!"

To the eye of a stranger, he appeared at this time full "ten years older" than he was; but more intimate acquaintance removed this impression. Delicacy of health had indeed set on him already some of the external marks of age; and a stoop which he contracted early, and which lessened his apparent stature, added much to this effect. But the agility of his step, the quickness of all his senses, (though he only heard with one ear,) his sparkling eye, and the compass and beauty of his voice, contradicted all these first appearances. And those who listened with delight to the freshness and exuberance of thoughts, sometimes deeply serious, sometimes playful and humorous, which enriched his conversation, could hardly believe that he had long borne the weight even of manly years. At the breakfast-table, and again from the setting-in of evening until midnight were his gayest times; at the last, especially, all his faculties were in the fullest exercise; and when being read to in his family circle, which was his delight, he poured forth all his stores, gathering around him book after book to illustrate, question, or confirm the immediate subject of the evening.

From Barham Court, where he had stopped on his return to London, he thus writes to Mrs. Hannah More:

"You really provoke me, my dear friend, when you begin your letter by saying that you are always sorry to break in upon me. As if you did not know, that to hear from you is always to me like a piece of fine smooth-shaven down to a horseman who is almost worn out by plodding his weary way through deep clayey roads, or picking his steps among stony paths. The very animal he rides is revived by the change, and in-



stinctively sets up a canter. I suppose my reader is the animal's archetype; though he, less lively than the four-footed performer, does not seem to partake of the animation. Or rather, to speak the truth, he would not, for I need not assure you that I do not commit your epistles to his perusal. The idea was suggested by his being at this moment at my side, in a state not unaptly described by my representation. \* \* \*

"To see so little of you is a standing grievance of my life, (I speak seriously.) But you possess a first place in my heart. May the Almighty support and bless you. I am concerned for poor Patty also. But *this vile body* is to be the exclamation here below. By and by it will be, Thanks to God, who hath given us the victory through Jesus Christ! Farewell. Let me hear from you occasionally, and never be so affected again as to talk of breaking in upon me.

"Mrs. Wilberforce desires me to send her kindest remembrances; give mine to the sisterhood, and believe me, ever your sincere and affectionate friend,

"W. WILBERFORCE.

"P. S.—Alas! alas! this sad war with America! I never felt any public incident so deeply. Yet, on the whole, I thank God I can lay my head on my pillow in peace, for our government is not chargeable with the blood-guiltiness; but Madison, Jefferson, etc."

In the quiet hours of his retirement, he had been looking forward to his London life, and resolving on such rules as he thought would be then useful to him. Above all, he determined "when not unavoidably prevented by company or House of Commons, to take an hour, or at least half an hour, for private devotions, including Scripture-reading and meditation,

immediately before family prayers. Besides other benefits, one will be to send me back into society with a more spiritual mind, and to help me to preserve it through the evening, and to make the conversation more edifying and instructive. How can I expect a blessing otherwise? Oh! let me reform here; it has been my standing sin of late. I must therefore remember that I shall find it difficult to adhere to the reformed system. The best hope will arise from my bearing about with me a deep impression of the difficulty, and of my own weakness, and of the urgent need of Divine help. Also aim at universal holiness, guard against self-indulgence and love of human estimation. Oh! how that vile passion will creep in! Even now it is at work, fold within fold. Lord, thou knowest me; I cast myself on Thy pardoning mercy and sanctifying grace."

Upon his return to London, he set apart a day for more especial private devotions. "I have had serious doubts whether or not it is right to do so when I have so many important subjects to consider, and so much to do; yet the examples, as well as the writings of good men, and above all, the Holy Scriptures, taking the precepts which directly treat of fasting, and comparing them with others, warrant it. N. B.—Christ's words about the demons, which expelled only by fasting and prayer. Then as to my being now extremely occupied, Owen's remark in some degree applies, (inference from Malachi,) that we should give God, if needful, our best time. O Lord! Thy blessing can render far more than a day's time as nothing even in my worldly business, and if the main-spring's force be strengthened, and its working improved, (cleansed from dust and foulness,) surely the machine will go better. Lord, what I do I trust is pleasing to Thee; accept and bless my service."

"Let me look over my 'grounds for humiliation,' my 'company regulations.' How sadly apt am I to lose all recollection of these, and of keeping my heart when I am in society! Lord, strengthen me with might. Let Christ dwell, not merely occasionally visit, but dwell in my heart by faith. Let me cultivate more a habitual love of God—Butler and Barrow—habitual gratitude. Let me try some memorandum analogous to the phylactery. See Numb. 15:38, 40."

His time was so fully occupied by important questions in the House of Commons, and pressing business out of it, that as yet he found little increased leisure from his change of station. His Diary shows the nature of these occupations.

"Dec. 7th. Breakfasters numerous, and not clear from company till time to go to British and Foreign Bible Society's monthly committee meeting, to get a grant of Testaments for the West-Indies; 2000 willingly granted. To Babington's and wrote letters. Met Butterworth fresh from Ireland. . . his communications show sad hostility of mind between Protestants and Roman Catholics. . . then House. Moving for papers about Slave Trade at Cape, and Mauritius. Lord Wellington's grant of £100,000 to buy an estate. After the House a discussion at Henry Thornton's with Babington, the Dean, and Stephen. At night home with the Dean. 8th. Fuller of Kettering breakfasted, and talked much about East-Indian Gospel Communication plan. Then town, Manufacturers' Committee—Duke of Kent in the chair, and very civil. Then Hatchard's, letters—home to dinner—Stephen, Simeon, the Dean, and others—the House. 12th. Forced to dine with the Duke of Gloucester. One of his mixed parties—Lord Sidmouth—Vansittart—Hastings, quite aged.

All splendid—Lord Sidmouth clever. Sheridan said of a person whom Lord Sidmouth does not like, Oh! he has an iron heart, but Lord Sidmouth has a fine spirit. 14th. To town to find out about Dr. B—— from Yarmouth, who had written for £20, without which he with his wife would be ruined—could learn nothing—so sent it doubtingly. African Institution, and home Voice not well to-day. Duchess of York took my antelope. 18th. Letters and callers till two. African Institution. House on grant to Russia £200,000\*—spoke but middlingly. 23d. To town about twelve to meet Brougham at Lord Bathurst's about Parke's Journals. Heard of Russian meeting, and that Duke of York in the chair. Went to Crown and Anchor, and found Lord Liverpool, Duke of York, Lord Castlereagh, N. Vansittart, Lord Harrowby, Lord Buckinghamshire, and several under-secretaries, and four or five Russian merchants—Samuel Thornton speaking—sixty or seventy common people—meeting utterly unknown—tried to get it put off; but being desired to speak, did shortly—rather pressing adjournment, but they had not presence of mind for it. Brougham had sent to know if any Whig, and then he would come. I pressed him to write to Lord Holland to make a second meeting. I fear the folly, if not worse, of not taking pains to have a full meeting, (perhaps for fear of having the business taken out of certain hands,) prevented more notice; and now there is danger of its being considered as cooked up between ministers and a few interested Russian merchants—sad, so to spoil a

\* A sum of £200,000 was voted for the relief of the sufferings brought upon the Russians by their gallant resistance to the common enemy. The meeting of the 23d, was to raise funds for the same purpose by private charity.

noble work which would have taken admirably, and given rise to a noble testimony of national admiration, esteem, benevolence, and gratitude. 24th. Town—read Report, corrected from Allen's draught at Freemasons' Hall—distressed manufacturers—Duke of Cambridge in the chair—he had never heard of Russian meeting, nor Stephen. So vexed at the folly of its managers, that after talking with Brougham and Lord Bathurst, I wrote Lord Liverpool and S. Thornton to get the meeting stated as a preliminary one before Christmas. 26th. To Lord Liverpool's by half-past eleven to confer about undoing the evil done by the Russian subscription management. Lord Harrowby, Vansittart, S. Thornton came. Agreed upon notifying another meeting—acting on my advice. Still I fear all or a hundredth part of the mischief can not be undone. Thence to secretary of Russian embassy, to tell him that the manufacturers wished to give supplies of manufactures.

"30th. Owen of Lanark, Dale's son-in-law and partner, breakfasted with me, and staid long talking with me of his plan of education, and of rendering manufactures and morals compatible." This visit was renewed soon after, and Mr. Grant and Henry Thornton met Mr. Owen by appointment. When Mr. Owen was proceeding to detail his schemes, he gently hinted that the ladies present might be suffered to retire from a discussion which must prove beyond their comprehension. Mr. Wilberforce eagerly dissented from the proposition; and it was well for Mr. Owen that he yielded, for he had not read long before "Grant, Henry Thornton, and I were all fast asleep, and the despised ladies were his only real audience." "One of my great principles, Mr. Wilberforce," said the schemer, "is, that persons

ought to place themselves in the situation of others, and act as they would wish themselves to be treated." "Is that quite a new principle, Mr. Owen?" was his answer, with that look of suppressed humor, which gave his countenance an archness of expression which no description can convey. "I think I have read something very like it in a book called the New Testament." "Very possibly it may be so," gravely answered the imperturbable philosopher. Yet such was his universal kindness, that Mr. Owen left him to tell others that Mr. Wilberforce was charmed with his discoveries.

"Owen of Lanark," says his diary, "with a new view of man—strange, fanciful speculations, and practical success amongst Dr. Dales' children. Grant and I fell asleep, but I kept his paper and ran over it afterwards. Strange that the Quakers, even the sensible Allen admires it. So do the Socinians, or half-Socinians." Christmas brought his children around him, and he was joining in all their business and amusements. "Being read to aloud," by one, "examining another in history, watching carefully over all their tempers," taking them to the "British Museum" to see a "great fish," and to "toy-shops;" "running races with them in the garden," or, a still greater pleasure, "reading aloud through the long evenings." "Rokeby lent me in quarto—I wait to buy the cheaper octavo; all earnest for reading it, and interested beyond measure, but chiefly for the story. Left off and locked it up during Sunday. "I must put down," he says amidst these various engagements, "that I have had lately too little time for private devotions; I must take at least an hour for them every morning. I can sadly confirm Doddridge's remark, 'that when we go on ill in the closet we commonly do so everywhere else.' I must mend

here; I am afraid of getting into what Owen calls a trade of sinning and repenting. Yet where can I go else? Thou only, O Lord! canst pardon and sanctify me. Oh! what unspeakable comfort it is to cast oneself on the Saviour, as a guilty, weak sinner in myself, but as trusting in the gracious promises of God through the Redeemer! Let him that is athirst come. Lord, I must flee to Thee, and cleave to Thee. Be Thou my all in all."

At times, in the secret struggles of his heart, he laments that he was "unable to realize the presence of God. It was as if there had been a wall of separation that I could not penetrate or see over; and my heart dead and cold. Surely it is not enthusiasm to notice these sensations, as David does. Lord, renew and quicken me." But this was not his common state. His secret entries testify that habitual peace, combined with the deepest humility, were in him the blessed fruits of keeping God's watch carefully. They are well expressed in an entry at this time. "I am just returned from a highly impressive sermon by Mr. Dum. I hope that my sensibility is in some degree the effect of the Holy Spirit, the knocking of Christ at the door of my heart. I must not spend any of my few minutes before dinner in writing; but let me just record my feelings of deep humiliation, yet of confiding though humble faith—looking to the Saviour as my only ground of hope. I cast myself at the foot of the cross, bewailing my exceeding sinfulness and unprofitableness, deeply, most deeply aggravated by the infinity of my mercies. I plead Thy precious promises, and earnestly pray to Thee to shed abroad in my heart more love, more humility, more faith, more hope, more peace, and joy; in short, to fill me with all the fullness of God, and make

me more meet to be a partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light. Then shall I also be better in all the relations of life in which I am now so defective, and my light will shine before men, and I shall adorn the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things."



## CHAPTER XXXI.

Two most important topics at this time claimed his attention, and occupied largely his time and efforts; the Catholic question and the opening the Indian Empire freely to the action of Christian missionaries. On both he took a very decided stand, and for the promotion of the latter object he exerted himself with untiring assiduity. As regarded the propriety of admitting Roman Catholics to a seat in Parliament, he held views diametrically opposed to those of the friends with whom he acted in most religious matters; contending that as they were already entitled to vote it was better they should be represented by honorable members of their own denomination, than by professed Protestants; and though in this, as in all other questions, general popularity and party principles were no rule for him to steer by, and though he suffered keenly from shocking upon such a question, the conscientious scruples of those whose principles he most esteemed, yet even this feeling could not for a moment bias his decision. "Lord direct me," he prays on this question; "all the religious people are on the other side, but they are sadly prejudiced." "It grieves me to separate from the Dean, and all my religious friends; but conscience must be obeyed. God does not direct us to use carnal weapons in His cause."

He had long been engaged to spend the Easter week (during which the House adjourned) with his family, in visiting Lord Gambier, but resolved, after a severe struggle, "to give it up entirely, not being able to spare the time now when it is so much needed for East-Indian religion, and seeing people on it." This was one great branch of his exertions. All had access to him, and he could enter everywhere. He was the link between the most dissimilar allies. Bishops and Baptists found in him a common term. "After breakfast Messrs. Gutteridge, Weymouth, and Shaw, three Baptist committee gentlemen, called on me about East-India Baptist missionaries. Called on the Bishop of St. David's and tried to stir him up. Called Earl ——'s about East-India religious business, found him full of prejudice and ignorance. How sad that so noble a mind as his should be rendered so indifferent to the happiness of our fellow-creatures!"

In the midst of this engrossing struggle, he was threatened with a serious attack of sickness, and for one day was very ill. The temper of his mind under this distressing interruption is a striking proof of the degree in which the prayer with which he entered on the cause had graciously been answered. He had asked for simplicity of purpose, and his cheerfulness when laid aside, shows how pure had been the motives of his activity. "April 24th. A blank day; and really I could do nothing but think of God's goodness to me, in that, even when I am ill, I suffer no pain. General Calvert told me of Col. ——'s most painful operation, (twenty minutes long,) after great previous suffering, undergoing immense fatigues, and unable to spare himself when suffering agonies. Oh! how much will men bear for a corruptible crown! Poor fellow! it is very

affecting. May God touch his heart. How thankful ought I to be for having been spared it all! Here, as usual, God most merciful. My Saviour spares me."

Two days later, April 26, he says: "A very fine day after excessive rain—all the trees in leaf—lilacs come out. Heard the nightingale a little. The first this year. My children around me. My wife in health, and all most beautiful and comfortable about me. What cause have I for thankfulness! Pretty well in health myself, and for two or three hours doing business in the garden. East-India religion—Lord T.'s pamphlet, and thinking."

The hidden safeguard of his happy simplicity of purpose, may be found in the record of his secret hours. "Secured," he says at his busiest time, "an hour for private devotions this morning and yesterday, and found the effects of it." "This East-Indian object," was his declaration when he undertook it, "is assuredly the greatest that ever interested the heart, or engaged the efforts of man. How wonderful that a private man should have such an influence on the temporal and eternal happiness of millions; literally, millions on millions yet unborn! O God! make me more earnest for Thy glory; and may I act more from real love and gratitude to my redeeming Lord." "Oh! how does this little check of sickness," he continues after his recovery, "impress on me the duty of working while it is day; the night cometh when no man can work! Let me not take my estimate of myself from others who do not know me, but from my own self-knowledge and conscience. Oh! what cause have I for contrition! What misspent time, what wasted talents, what means of grace (no one so many and so great) with how little profit; what self-indulgent habits; what softness, instead of

the hardness of a good soldier of Christ ! It may be shown in any improper want of self-denial. O Lord ! may my faith and love be more active, bringing forth more the fruits of the Spirit."

In this temper he pursued his work. After using great efforts to enlist the religious people of every denomination throughout the kingdom in the support of the measures proposed, which met with the most determined hostility on the part of the Board of Directors of the East-India Company, he was finally able to induce the ministry to determine to recommend the adoption by Parliament of the measures he advocated. The great strength of the Anglo-Indian party lay in the House of Commons, and the resolutions of the government might be defeated there. He prepared himself diligently to address the House, and on the presentation of the Resolution which covered his views, though the appearance of the House was as adverse as could be, he never spoke with greater power, or produced more impression. Twenty years before, he had appeared in the same place, the eloquent advocate of this same cause. He had beyond all expectation been spared to lead the onset in a new engagement ; and he told the House that his silence during that long period was not because the subject had faded from his recollection, but because he had meanwhile been devoted to the payment of another debt to humanity which was even yet but imperfectly discharged. He went through the whole subject at length, proving the degraded character of the Hindoo superstition, and calmly reasoning out his own conclusions ; yet relieving the unavoidable prolixity of such a speech by occasional flashes of the brightest eloquence. "He who knows my heart," he said in closing his account of the Hindoo superstitions,

"knows that I have not drawn this melancholy picture to exult over its blackness. It is with grief and shame I view it ; mourning, sir, over my own country, which for fifty years and more has left so many millions of our fellow-creatures in this state of misery and vice. I am not bringing a bill of indictment against the Indian race—but I have lived long enough to learn 'that flatterers are not friends.' I am the true friend of this people, who am willing to allow their present degradation, that I may raise them to a higher level." He thus records the result :

"We carried it, about 89 to 36, beyond all hope. I heard afterwards, that many good men had been praying for us all night. Oh ! what cause for thankfulness ; yet almost intoxicated with success." The impression of nine hundred petitions, a number then wholly without precedent on such a subject, could not be mistaken. "Let no man think," was Mr. Wilberforce's warning to the House, "that the petitions which have loaded our table, have been produced by a burst of momentary enthusiasm ; or that the zeal of the petitioners will be soon expended. No, sir, it will be found to be steady as the light of heaven. While the sun and moon continue to shine in the firmament, so long will this object be pursued with unabated ardor until the great work be accomplished."

One great argument of his opponents was grounded on, the enthusiastic character which they imputed to the missionary body. India hitherto had seen no missionary who was a member of the English Church, and imputations could be cast more readily on "Anabaptists and fanatics." These attacks Mr. Wilberforce indignantly refuted, and well had the noble conduct of the band at Serampore deserved this vindication. "I do

not know," he often said, "a finer instance of the moral sublime, than that a poor cobbler working in his stall should conceive the idea of converting the Hindoos to Christianity; yet such was Dr. Carey. Why, Milton's planning his *Paradise Lost* in his old age and blindness was nothing to it. And then when he had gone to India, and was appointed by Lord Wellesley to a lucrative and honorable station in the college of Fort William, with equal nobleness of mind he made over all his salary (between £1000 and £1500 per annum) to the general objects of the mission. By the way, nothing ever gave me a more lively sense of the low and mercenary standard of your men of honor, than the manifest effect produced upon the House of Commons by my stating this last circumstance. It seemed to be the only thing which moved them." Dr. Carey had been especially attacked, and "a few days afterwards the member who had made this charge came to me, and asked me in the manner which in a noted duellist could not be mistaken: 'Pray, Mr. Wilberforce, do you know a Mr. Andrew Fuller, who has written to desire me to retract the statement which I made with reference to Dr. Carey?' 'Yes,' I answered with a smile, 'I know him perfectly, but depend upon it you will make nothing of him in your way; he is a respectable Baptist minister at Kettering.' In due time there came from India an authoritative contradiction of the slander. It was sent to me, and for two whole years did I take it in my pocket to the House of Commons to read it to the House whenever the author of the accusation should be present; but during that whole time he never once dared show himself in the House."

His own personal influence had been a powerful instrument in gaining this result. Never had he been

able to bring forward in the House so openly his own religious principles ; never had they been more respectfully received. "Last session," says a shrewd and even caustic critic, whose sentiments were wholly different, "when the house had been tired night after night with discussing the endless questions relating to Indian policy, Mr. Wilberforce, with a just confidence in his powers, ventured to broach the hackneyed subject of Hindoo conversion. He spoke three hours, but nobody seemed fatigued : all indeed were pleased ; some with the ingenious artifices of his manner, but most with the glowing language of his heart. Much as I differed from him in opinion, it was impossible not to be delighted with his eloquence ; and though I wish most heartily that the Hindoos might be left to their own Trinity, yet I felt disposed to agree with him, that some good must arise to the human mind, by being engaged in a controversy which will exercise most of its faculties."

His friends were looking with some anxiety to the effect which these great exertions might produce upon his weakly frame.

This too was far from having been his sole business. Almost every day brought its separate burden. A few extracts from his Diary, with which it was impossible to break the chain of facts connected with his leading business, will show how closely the interstices it left were packed with other matters.

"March 4th. Lock Hospital meeting. Then African Institution—Duke of Gloucester. Dined Henry Thornton's, and House. 5th. Hudson and Smith, chemists, about Apothecaries' Bill. Then Burder and Osgood about latter's plan. Wrote a little. Town—Berbice meeting. Long talk with Lord —— about the Governor's ill usage of us. Poor Lord —— very unreasonable

and positive. How calm one can be, when acting with real disinterestedness! Yet curious, that I only arguing with him for his own interest and credit's sake. 19th. Castlereagh showed me what he had told me before, Sweden's abolition and Guadaloupe surrender—Euge. April 7th. Jews—London Tavern. First stone laying at Bethnall Green—Duke of Kent, Lord Erskine and Dundas, etc. Dinner afterwards. Grand day, and about £1000 collected. Erskine's animated speech. Way's fire. Frey's pathos. 10th. African Institution meeting. Lords Grenville, Landsdowne, etc., about Registry Bill, and large meeting. 20th. Canning came to me about Roman Catholic Bill; with him to Mr. Ponsonby by Grattan's desire. Mr. Elliot there. Sir J. Newport, Romilly, and Sir Ar. Pigott, besides Ponsonby and Grattan. Talked over the matter. 28th. Breakfast with Canning. After talking over Roman Catholic business, to Hatchard's, to meet Blair. Pearson, John Villiers, etc., to revive the Lock Asylum. 29th. Forced to attend a meeting for Lock Asylum—right, but an hour and a half expended. Called Grattan's, Lord Erskine's, and Donoughmore's. Lodgings—and House. Then with Henry Thornton to City of London Tavern—anniversary dinner for foreigners in distress, Duke of Gloucester in the chair—very civil. Near 200 people, and excellent object, but no foreign minister. Near £1000 collected after dinner.

“ May 4th. Annual sermon, and meeting of Church Missionary Society for Africa and East. Dealtry, excellent sermon. Meeting afterwards, and spoke. Late to Asiatic Society, where took the chair—then House. 5th. British and Foreign Bible Society anniversary—full meeting—I spoke, and well received. Dined Lord Teignmouth's—Bishops of Salisbury, St. David's,



Cloyne; and Norwich was to have been there, but prevented. 6th. Prayer Book and Homily Society—spoke, after a sermon. which could not attend causâ meeting at Gloucester House—Lord Grey, Landsdowne, Stephen, Macaulay, Harrison, Vansittart, about Registry Bill. 7th. Jewish Meeting anniversary—sermon yesterday, Randolph of Bath—I spoke. 12th. Archbishop of Cashel called morning—much talk with him about Ireland. 13th. Morning busy. Dined hastily Henry Thornton's. House on Catholic question. Charles Grant spoke, beautiful but too elaborately. I, alas! too strong afterwards; as professing to act from higher principles, I ought to be more affectionate, and gentle, and meek."

This entry is a striking instance of the careful watch over his tongue which he so jealously maintained. Other members in the course of the debate declared that he had not spoken more severely than the occasion fully justified. But he judged by another standard, and in his next Sunday's meditation beautifully adds: "Having so little time I must not spend any in writing. Let me only record my own grief and shame; and all probably from private devotions having been contracted, and so God let me stumble. How much too strongly did I speak in the House of Commons, concerning Sir J. Hippisley! Alas! how little exhibiting the temper of the meek and lowly Jesus! Yet I humbly hope I have bewailed my sin with bitter contrition, and but for the weakness of my eyes could shed many tears. Lord, I flee to Thee for mercy, and do Thou guide and direct me. Yesterday's decision to have a committee of inquiry concerning the state and treatment in law and fact of the slaves and colored people in our West-India islands, will bring on me an immense load, if I

undertake it; greater I fear than I can bear. Yet, Lord, to thee I look, for 'Thou delightest in mercy.' Oh! soften, quicken, warm, and sanctify me."

His children now were much upon his mind. They gathered all around him at Sandgate, during the summer recess, and he watched over them as usual with the deepest interest. "I can scarcely," he wrote to a friend, with an inclosure which had been sent for his perusal, "conceive any earthly pleasure greater than that of receiving such a letter from a beloved son, who shows by his conduct that he writes the real sentiments and feelings of his heart. I am conscious of my own extremely inadequate powers in all that concerns the work of education, but I humbly trust that I can say with truth that the spiritual interests of my children are my first object, I mean that I wish to see them become real Christians, rather than great scholars, or eminent in any other way: and I earnestly pray to God for wisdom to direct me, and that His grace may be given in large measures to my children; resolving at the same time, since the Almighty acts by means, to consider thoroughly, and after consideration to pursue the dictates of my judgment. I own I am rather sanguine in my hopes of the result, on ground of the Scripture promises. Join your prayers, my dear friend, to mine, and give me also from time to time the benefits of your friendly counsel." In the same tone he tells Mrs. Wilberforce: "My best hopes for them rest on the declaration, that God hears and grants the prayers of His people through the merits and intercession of the Saviour. Oh! let us press on to a higher proficiency in the Christian life as the surest expedient for their good. We do not—even those who hold the truths of Christianity correctly—we do not

think enough or speak enough of the Saviour. I would gladly have Him continually before me. I find the sense of His presence produces a humble, calm, confiding dependence, making me 'walk softly.' To you I open all my heart."

## CHAPTER XXXII.

HERE his time was passed in his usual summer occupations. "I get up about seven; then serious time and devotions for an hour; then dressing and hearing the children read to me for three quarters of an hour. After breakfast, letters, and writing, dictating, etc. We dine together early, and then some of the children read till we walk out from about six till eight; then coming in, I have an hour serious. Then family prayers, supper, and bed about eleven. I must try to see more of the children, and to obtain more time to study. Hitherto I have done little but write letters." The record of each succeeding year of his life is but the repetition of that which it followed, with the variations produced by the diversity of subjects which claimed attention as the current of events, public and private, flowed swiftly by; and whether it was the perfecting his past efforts for the abolition of the African slave trade, the watching over the interests of the negroes in the West-India colonies, or at Sierra Leone, the promotion of the opening Hindoostan to the efforts of Christian missionaries, the providing for the necessities of the poor Germans who were suffering from starvation in consequence of the long-continued continental wars, or of the Lascars, brought to London in East-India vessels, and left perishing in the streets—his mind

and powers were ever kept fully engaged; not only himself active, but drawing others forward to be his coadjutors, and training them to take up the harness, as he should lay it aside. Society, in addition to the claims of charity, and public affairs, presented its claims upon his time and thoughts. With regard to social intercourse and its influence, he says:

"When attending," on the 8th of February, "a meeting of the African Institution, Sir S. Romilly told me aloud that Madame de Stael\* assured him she wished more to be acquainted with me than with any other person. The Duke of Gloucester made me, by her express desire, fix a day for meeting her at dinner, chez lui—Saturday se'nnight. This is mere vanity, and perhaps curiosity; and I felt my vanity a little rising, too, on the occasion. Oh! how full are we of this degrading passion; and how diligently should we counteract it by calling up the ideas of what degrades us, and of the judgment we should form of others in whom we saw the same temper of mind! Thus we learn to abhor ourselves, and to sit in judgment on ourselves as on others. Lord, enable me thus to scrutinize and condemn myself more and more. She told the Duke of Gloucester that I did not think how really religious she was. I must read her *L'Allemagne*, in order not to excite her prejudices. It will also enable me better to distinguish between her religion and the true, in conversing with others."

"19th. Dined Duke of Gloucester's to meet Madame

\* She thus mentions having met him at a public meeting for aid to Germans, "*Considerations sur la Revolution Française*:" "L'homme le plus aimé, et le plus considéré de toute l'Angleterre, M. Wilberforce, put à peine se faire entendre, tant les applaudissements couvraient sa voix."

de Stael, at her desire—Madame, her son and daughter, Duke, two aides-du-camp, Vansittart, Lord Erskine, poet Rogers, and others. Madame de Stael quite like her book, though less hopeful—complimenting me highly on abolition—‘All Europe,’ etc. But I must not spend time in writing this. She asked me, and I could not well refuse, to dine with her on Friday to meet Lord Harrowby and Mackintosh, and poet Rogers, on Tuesday se’nnight. This would lead to an endless round of dinners, but it neither suits my mind or body; when I dine late, the previous hours are worth little, and the rest of the evening goes to society. I greatly doubt about the doing any good by dinings-out. By going out now and then in the evening, when I have dined early, and am fresher and brisker, I should be better fitted to adorn religion and seize occasions of doing good: now I am often sleepy, and not having duly cultivated the religious principle by private devotions, it is weak, and I grow worldly and useless. I may fairly assign weak health, and dine early, and so get more hours for business.”

“I must secure more time for private devotion, for self-examination, for meditation, for keeping the heart, and even doing the duties of life, or the most pressing claims will carry it, not the strongest. I have been living far too publicly for me—‘Notus magis omnibus.’ Oh! may it not be ‘ignotus moritur sibi.’ Lord, help me. The shortening of private devotions starves the soul, it grows lean and faint. This must not be. Oh! how sad, that after trying to lead a Christian life for twenty-eight years, I should be at all staggered by worldly company—Madame de Stael, etc. I will not, however, please God, enter and be drawn into that magic circle into which they would tempt me.”

"23d. Breakfast. Mr. Barnett about the poor. Letters. Wrote to Madame de Stael and poet Rogers, to excuse myself from dining with them. It does not seem the line in which I can now glorify God. Dinner quiet, and letters afterwards."

"March 4th. Much unpleasant doubting what I ought to do about Madame de Stael. Lady S. tells me that there has been much discussion whether I should go, and wagers laid; but Madame de Stael said she was sure I should come, because I had said I would. What care this shows we should take, because we shall be more closely watched, more strictly judged! I must do away the effect of this in her mind, that she may not think I conceive I may speak conventional falsehoods, the very doctrine and crime of the world, which so resents what it calls lies, and the imputation of them.

"10th. I have consented to dine with Madame de Stael; I could not well do otherwise. Bowdler said much to persuade me. Let me try to speak plainly, though tenderly, to her." "18th. Dined with Madame de Stael—her son and daughter, and two other foreigners, Lord Harrowby, Lord and Lady Lansdown, Sir James Mackintosh. Lord and Lady Granville Leveson were to have dined, but Lady Spencer died that morning. She asked me to name the party. A cheerful, pleasant dinner. She talking of the final cause of creation—not utility, but beauty—did not like Paley—wrote about Rousseau at fifteen, and thought differently at fifty. Evening, assembly, but I came away at half-past eleven. A brilliant assembly of rank and talent." "The whole scene," was his next day's reflection, "was intoxicating even to me. The fever arising from it is not yet gone off, (half-past 8 A.M.,) though opposed by the most serious motives and considerations both last

night and this morning. How dangerous, then, must such scenes, (literally of dissipation, dissipating the spirits, the mind, and for a time almost the judgment,) be to young people in the hey-day of youth, and life, and spirits! How unfit for those who are to watch unto prayer, to walk soberly, to be sober-minded! Something in my own case may be fairly ascribed to natural high spirits, and I fear, alas! much to vanity, and a good deal to my being unaccustomed to such scenes; yet after allowing for these weaknesses and peculiarities, must not the sobriety of my age, my principles, my guard, (prayer preceding my entering into the enchanted ground,) be fairly considered as abating the effect, so much as that I may be a fair average sample of the effect of such scenes on young people in general of agreeable manners, and at all popular ways and characters? I am sure I durst not often venture into these scenes. Then the seasoning is so high that it would render all quiet domestic pleasures insipid. Even poor Paley used to say, (though I hope jokingly,) ‘Who ever talks to his wife?’ This showed even in him, the danger of being fascinated by social gayety. O Lord! enable me to view last night’s scene in its true colors, and shapes, and essences. I have not time to trace out the draught. May I remember that they and I are accountable, dying creatures, soon to appear at the judgment-seat of Christ, and be asked whether we avoided temptation, and endeavored to preserve a frame of spirit suited to those who had to work out their salvation with fear and trembling.”

“I am now engaged to many parties, yet I must not go on thus. It unfits my mind for private devotions, and makes me too late, steals me from my children, and even from my business, which from my weak health I



must do by contrivance. O Lord ! guide me ; let me not do anything contrary to the liberal and social spirit of Thy religion, but let me have wisdom to see what is really required from me, and resolution to perform it. My own soul should doubtless be my first object, and combined with it, my children, . . how much better might I serve them if I cultivated a closer connection with God ! . . my business, and doing good to others. I am clear it is right for me to withdraw from the gay and irreligious, though brilliant society of Madame de Stael and others. I am, I hope, thankful to God that I am not given up to these pleasures. Oh ! let me labor that I may not be merely gratifying an indolent spirit by staying away. Let me cultivate a spiritual mind, that if any be really in earnest I may then approximate and show them that I can feel ; and oh ! may God touch their hearts also. How surely is every one who is in earnest, useful to others ! Poor Lord G. ! Let me talk with him, and guard him against the deception of being satisfied with the world's religion. Indeed, he knows too much for that. But oh ! may I above all, pray and strive for a larger measure of softening, warming, quickening grace. Amen."

This calm and self-denying judgment of himself is not a little striking in one, whose past labors and long-settled character would have exempted him in the eyes of the most scrupulous from the necessity of such rules of conduct. Nor was it that any touch of age had damped the exuberance of his younger spirits ; and that he withdrew morosely from scenes in which he could not, as of old, give and experience pleasure. "Mr. Wilberforce," was Madame de Stael's declaration to Sir James Mackintosh, "is the best converser I have met with in this country. I have always heard

that he was the most religious, but I now find that he is the wittiest man in England." His social qualities are about this very time thus described by his friend Mr. Harford. "The first time I met Mr. Wilberforce, was at the house of his friend, Mr. Henry Thornton. I had heard him speak in the morning, in a crowded meeting, at the anniversary of a public charity, when elevated sentiments and touching appeals, rendered doubly impressive by the fine tones of his musical voice, had deeply affected the feelings of the auditory. There was a dinner-party at Mr. Thornton's, and several of the guests were among the particular friends of Mr. Wilberforce. Mr. Thornton, before we sat down to table, expressed a hope that he would join us in a few minutes. We had not been long seated when he entered the room with a smiling, animated countenance, and a lively vivacity of movement and manner; exchanging as he advanced, kind salutations with his friends, whose faces were lighted up with peculiar pleasure at his presence. From my earliest youth I had been taught to reverence the name of Wilberforce, so that my delight was great to find myself in his company. His manner and address throughout the afternoon were marked by kindness and vivacity, and his style of conversation was brilliant and easy.

"Those who never saw him till within eight or ten years of his decease, when his figure had become a good deal bent, and his head depressed upon his chest by the weight of years acting on an extremely delicate frame, can not easily form a just idea of him at the period to which I now refer. Some tendency to these infirmities, it is true, was already apparent, but the elasticity and spring of his movements, the comparative erectness of his figure, and the glow on his cheek,

presented a strong contrast to the decrepitude which gradually stole upon him in his declining years. His frame was at all times extremely spare, and seemed to indicate that the ethereal inhabitant within was burdened with as little as possible of corporeal encumbrances; but from this attenuated frame proceeded a voice of uncommon compass and richness, whose varying and impressive tones, even in common conversation, bespoke the powers of the orator. His eyes, though small, and singularly set, beamed with the expression of acute intelligence, and of comprehension, quick as lightning, blended with that of cordial kindness and warmth of heart. A peculiar sweetness and playfulness marked his whole manner. There was not a single handsome feature—there was scarcely one that was not in itself plain; but the mingled emanations of imagination and intellect, of benevolence and vivacity, diffused over his countenance a sort of sunny radiance, which irresistibly acted as a powerful magnet on the hearts of all who approached him. At this time, and till within a very few years of his death, he wore powder; and his dress and appearance were those of a complete gentleman of the old school.”

## CHAPTER XXXIII.

It was not only with the natural feelings of an Englishman that he surveyed the progress of public events on the continent, anxious for the preservation of peace, if possible, even with Bonaparte, and watching for the opportunity to make every occasion subservient to the promotion of the abolition of the slave trade, but as one ever looking to the providence of God which controls all human events. When he heard of the success of the allied arms, and the retiring of Bonaparte to Elba, he inquires of a friend: "Have you good authority for believing that Toussaint perished on Elba? If so, and if Bonaparte himself selected it, he is harder-hearted than Shakspeare would have rendered his greatest villains."

To the congratulations of his friend William Hey, upon the continental triumph, he replies a few days later:

"NEAR LONDON, *April*, 1814.

"MY DEAR SIR: If I had not 'extremely occupied' to plead in my defense, I should feel quite uncomfortable at having been, I had almost said churlishly, irresponsible to your animated call. And I own I have been condemning myself for not echoing back the songs of grateful acknowledgment. Never surely was the hand of the Almighty more strikingly manifested. Had not Bonaparte been absolutely infatuated, he never would

have broken off the conferences at Chatillon. I like your verses much, and can imagine my old friend joining in chorus and singing with all his might. I have been thinking how to convey them to the hands of the Regent, but have not yet devised a way. For I have been for some time, till two days ago, a close prisoner from an attack on the lungs, or rather trachea; for which a blister and silence were prescribed to me by Dr. Baillie. I thank God I am much recovered, indeed nearly well again. I am just now extremely occupied, both mind and thoughts, with considering about, and taking measures for, effecting a convention among the great powers, for the abolition of the slave trade. It would be indeed a glorious termination of the hurricane. But do not talk publicly of this."

"It would be too shocking," he says to Mr. Gisborne, "to restore to Europe the blessings of peace with professions of our reverence for the principles of justice and humanity, and at the same moment to be creating, for so it would really be doing wherever the slave trade is extinct, this traffic in the persons of our fellow-creatures. We are much occupied with the grand object of prevailing on all the great European powers to agree to a convention for the general abolition of the slave trade. Oh! may God turn the hearts of these men! What a great and blessed close would it be of the twenty-two years' drama!"

His own special part in this effort was to prepare a letter to the Emperor Alexander. "I am about to correspond with a real live emperor," he concludes a letter to Mr. Gisborne, "not merely such a sort of Birmingham emperor as Bonaparte; so admire my condescension, which can bestow all this penmanship upon you." At

this he set to work directly, though he found it difficult to rescue from his other occupations the time which it required. "An incessant succession of inferior concerns," he complains, "prevents my doing this really important business. I can not yet please myself at all; and I have written to beg Bowdler to try his hand at a head and tail piece at least. Use your influence with him. I can not keep myself from interruptions." "Though I have as little conception," replied Mr. Bowdler, "how to address an emperor, as if he were an inhabitant of the moon, I half had intended to put what occurred to me, upon paper, in order that after seeing the failures of other pens, you might be better satisfied with your own. Depend upon it, whatever styles you employ as contributory, if you consult the wise they will insist on your ultimately adopting your own."

This in the end he did, though little able to secure the leisure he desired. "I find myself," he says, "stupid and slow, and not able to move at all to my liking in composition. My mind must be filled and warmed, then I can pour along pretty well. I am like a horse which can not get into a gallop till it has some space in which to come to its speed; the incessant interruption of little things, obstructs my progress. I have been sadly bothered about the French translation, and forced to write so many letters that I could not get to my work till very late." He, however, kept close to it: "writing the foul copy" of his letter as he walked "in the garden;" and even giving to it some of that time which he most reluctantly conceded to any worldly care. "I stay at home to-day, (Sunday, April 17th,) on account of my cold, and I am about, after a short prayer for the Divine blessing, to set to work on my letter to the Emperor. I do it as in God's sight.

Surely this occupation is pleasing to Him who says: Mercy is better than sacrifice. I can truly say, in the presence of the Searcher of hearts, that I do not engage in it from inclination, for the contrary is the truth, but because it is a business which presses greatly in time, and which tends eminently to the glory of God, and the present and eternal happiness of men." Yet on the following Sunday, he says: "I will not quit the peculiar duties of the day for my abolition labors. Though last Sunday I set about them with a real desire to please God, yet it did not answer; my mind felt a weight on it, a constraint which impeded the free and unfettered movements of the imagination or intellect; and I am sure that this last week I might have saved for that work four times as much time as I assigned to it on Sunday. Therefore, though knowing that God prefers mercy to sacrifice, yet let me in faith give up this day to religious exercises, to strengthening the impression of invisible and divine things by the worship of God, meditation, and reading. I trust He will bless me during the week, and enable me to make up what might seem lost."

He concludes his letter to the Emperor, as follows:

"To the Divine blessing I now consign these pages. May that Almighty Being, whose I trust you are, and whom you serve, who has raised you up to be the chief agent in delivering the European continent from the bonds in which, by a mysterious Providence, it had been so long held, render you the honored instrument of accomplishing in Africa also His purposes of mercy. May you live, sire, to witness the blessed result of your beneficence, in the prevalence throughout those benighted regions of Christian light, and moral improvement, and social comfort; and to hear her sable child-

ren, when, in the language of Scripture, 'they spread forth their hands unto God,' call down not temporal only, but everlasting blessings on the head of Alexander, Emperor of the Russias, as the greatest of their earthly benefactors."

"I staved off yesterday," (Sunday,) his diary continues, "the thoughts of the abolition arrangements, but to-day they rushed on me, and grieved me deeply." When Lord Castlereagh, on his return from Paris with the treaty by which Napoleon abdicated the French throne and withdrew to Elba, entered the House of Commons, he was received with loud and enthusiastic cheers. The only voice which remained mute amidst the fervent burst of joy, was that of Mr. Wilberforce. No heart beat more highly than his with patriotic emotions, but this feeling was mastered by another which forbade its utterance. The acclamations, therefore, were no sooner hushed, amidst which Lord Castlereagh laid on the table a copy of the treaty, than he "opened upon him." "I can assure my noble friend," he exclaimed, "that if I have not been able to concur in the salutations with which he has been welcomed on his return, it is not from any want of personal cordiality, but because seeing him come up to the House bearing the French treaty, and calling to mind the arrangements made in it respecting the slave trade, I can not but conceive that I behold in his hand the death-warrant of a multitude of innocent victims, men, women, and children, whom I had fondly indulged the hope of having myself rescued from destruction. It is not, however, to give vent to the feelings of an overloaded mind, that I have now risen, for in truth my feelings are far too deeply seated for me to be thus eased of them, but I rise chiefly to notice two particulars, to



which I entreat my noble friend's immediate attention." One of them was the preventing a five years' revival of the Dutch slave trade, the other the imposing restrictions upon that of the French. "When I consider," he continued, "the miseries that we are now about to renew, is it possible to regard them without the deepest emotions of sorrow? Still, as all this was known to my noble friend, I will not suppose that he could lightly or without what appeared to him the most imperious and almost irresistible necessity set his hand to such a treaty. For my own part, indeed, I frankly declare no considerations could have induced me to consent to it." "My noble friend must allow for my extreme regret, if when at length, after a laborious contention of so many years, I had seemed to myself in some degree in possession of the great object of my life—if then, when the cup is at my lips, it is rudely dashed from them, for a term of years at least, if not forever."

Amidst these disappointments, he was not a little "thankful to hear that the Emperor Alexander, who, with the King of Prussia, was at this time in London, charged himself with the abolition in a Congress. He wishes to see me." On the evening of the 10th of June he "received a note summoning" him for one o'clock upon the morrow. "Sunday, 12th. Got up by half-past six, that I might pray to God for a blessing on my interview. Lock, (a chapel connected with a hospital of this name,) from which, to the Emperor. In his waiting-room were several of his nobles—Prince Czar-toriski, Prince of Oldenburgh, and others. At length the Emperor, who was absent at Messe, (Greek Church,) returned, with the Princess of Russia, (Oldenburgh,) and I was summoned up-stairs, and soon after into the

inner room to the Emperor. He took me by the hand, very cordially, and assured me that he was much interested for my object, and very glad to see me. On my stating my fear that the French would not in fact abolish at the time settled, he replied heartily, 'We must make them;' and then correcting himself, 'We must keep them to it.' I asked leave, before I left him, to write to him, conceiving that any thing I should say would be driven out of his mind by the incessant bustle of his situation. He frankly assented, and told me he should be glad to hear from me, and was obliged to me. He shook hands with me cordially. When I was expressing my concern about the treaty, he said: 'What could be done, when your own ambassador gave way?'

More than once he was summoned by Alexander to conversations, in which the Emperor spoke French, and he replied in English. The Duchess of Oldenburgh, and the King of Prussia, alike desired to see and talk with him; and from the latter he received a set of Dresden china, "the only thing," he playfully declared, "I ever got by spouting." But none amongst the band of monarchs and nobles interested him more than Prince Czartoriski, a Polish Prince, formerly Foreign Secretary to the Emperor. "Czartoriski came in and talked to me for an hour or two about his country, and especially our institutions, with a view to their adoption. He seems eager for useful information, and whatever could improve the people. He acquiesced when I lamented the Emperor's being only fêted, and not let alone to see useful things, courts of justice, etc."

Such reflections could not but force themselves upon the mind of calm and rational observers of these brilliant days, when after the close of the continental wars, the sovereigns of Europe met in the British capital.

"After we had, Hezekiah-like, ostentatiously exhibited our riches," says Mrs. H. More, "our gold and our silver, after having gorged them with banquets, which I hear they disliked, why were they not introduced to something serious besides the Quakers' meeting? I did not dislike to let them witness our own grandeur, and I like to express our respect and admiration for them, but why keep back from them every thing that was useful? They had really little more good to carry home than poor Omai had." Wilberforce at least was free from this reproach. "Too late," he says, June 30th, "for dinner, because writing about the Bible Society for Czartoriski, and getting for him some Reports of the Society for Bettering the Condition of the Poor." Many years afterwards, almost the last visit Mr. Wilberforce received was from this interesting man, when having resigned Russian greatness to fight the battles of his injured country, he sought the shores of England as an exile and a refugee.

The temper of his own mind, indeed, was wholly undisturbed by the agitation around him. "How delightful," he says after an evening spent in social intercourse, "to see the love, simple devotedness, and gratitude of the three —'s! How it shames my lukewarmness! Lord, forgive and help me, and let the example spur me on to greater diligence."

It is well worth while to trace up to its fountain-head, the quiet recollection of his principles amidst the hurry of his public life. Another entry of his diary will point it out. When most engaged this summer, he says: "I must try what I long ago heard was the rule of Elliot, the great upholsterer, who when he came from Bond street to his villa, always first retired into his closet. I will do it, though but for a short time.

It will, with God's blessing, be useful both for self-examination for the past, and seeking God for the future." "I have been keeping too late hours, and hence I have had but a hurried half-hour in a morning to myself. Surely the experience of all good men confirms the proposition, that without a due measure of private devotions the soul will grow lean. It is remarkable that at such times my business and worldly concerns have also gone on ill; enforcing on me old Sir M. Hale's remark, which might have been deemed too strong. O Lord! help me. I will try to assign at least an hour in the morning, and when circumstances will permit, the same in the evening, for Scripture reading, private devotion, and meditation. How little can I now realize the circle of angels and unseen spirits! Yet I hope I can truly say I allow not my corruptions. O Lord! strengthen my faith, send the Spirit of Thy Son into my heart, that I may call Thee Father, and set my affections upon things above."

At the end of July he left London, to devote the quiet of the summer to his great design. All his hopes hung on the result of the approaching Congress. It was therefore of the utmost moment to give to the public mind on the continent the same impulse which it had received in England. He had already tried, through Cardinal Gonsalvi, to influence the Romish conclave, and he now opened a correspondence with a number of literati, Alexander Humboldt, Sismondi, Chateaubriand, and Madame de Stael, in the hope that he might act through them upon their countrymen. He was himself preparing his chief effort, a printed letter to Talleyrand, which was to contain the strength of the abolition cause, and to be dispersed as the manifesto of its supporters. "How time flies away!" he writes. "For

a third time are we now all collected at Sandgate, enjoying wherever we are the overflowing bounty of the Almighty. The quiet of this place, so great a contrast to the bustle of my London life, produces a general sleepiness and stupefaction, which almost disqualify me for all active employment of my mental faculties. I must try to rouse and lash myself into something like animation ; but I can truly declare that I wish the office of writing a piece for general circulation devolved on a more able hand. I will do my best, however, after having executed two or three lesser duties which require immediate attention. I mean to write to the Emperor of Russia and the King of Prussia, and a private letter to Talleyrand. I hope herewith to transmit one to Chateaubriand. You know probably that Lord Castlereagh charged himself with communicating with the Pope. Have you seen the article in the Edinburgh Review on the Revival of the Slave Trade ? I do not think it quite fair, and any statements which can justly be pronounced unfair, are always in the end injurious as well as unjust."

The want of books, and a wish to be near the translator of his work, obliged him to return to London. This was no inconsiderable sacrifice. He loved to spend his summer holidays in the retirement of the country, surrounded by his children ; with whom he had " begun walking, and examining them in walks in the books which they are reading, and talking them over together," while " in the evening," almost the greatest of their treats, he was " reading to them Shakespeare." Occasionally, too, he made excursions with them for the day ; and in " Cæsar's camp and the cherry orchards" all the burden of his business was thrown off, and he was the most cheerful of the party. " We

took our dinner with us upon Saturday," is the description of such a day this summer in the letter of a guest, "and were fourteen in number. Mr. Wilberforce made us all very happy. He read, and talked, and carved, and reminded us of the benevolence of God in making the avenues of innocent pleasure so numerous, and forming us for so many enjoyments which have nothing sinful in them." "There is no way," is his own remark on this day, "in which children's tempers are more indicated than in such excursions." With the same watchfulness for their advantage, he tells Mr. Macaulay, that though "at first disposed at once to cut his cables and slip off for London," he had postponed his journey "until Monday, because I am to take —— with me on his way to school, and I like to make Sunday his last day at home. I think it tends to associate religion and domestic tenderness; to identify them with each other, and thereby augment both."

He continued his work at Battersea Rise, where he was a guest in the house which he had inhabited so many years before. He had left Sandgate hoping only to be kept a few days near London, but the claims of business multiplied upon him. On the 2d of September he tells Mrs. Wilberforce: "My anticipations are verified. I am forced to stay three or four days longer, I trust not more. The interests at stake are so prodigious that even the probability of advancing them constitutes an object of vast amount. What a comfort it is that my absence from you and our dear children is not when I am engaged in the work, however necessary for self-defense, and therefore justifiable, of blood and tears—making others miserable while endeavoring to secure our own happiness; but on the contrary, in the work of mercy and love; a work which may truly be

said to breathe the same spirit as that of Him whose coming was announced as 'peace on earth, and goodwill towards men!' Ay, and surely we need not leave out the most honorable part of the service, 'Glory to God in the highest.' For I am occupied, I trust, in preparing an entrance into Africa for the Gospel of Christ. I must say that I account it one of the greatest of the many and great mercies and favors of the Almighty, (Oh! how many and how great!) that His providence connected me with this good cause. I might have been occupied as honestly, but in ways, political ways for instance, in which the right path was doubtful."

He touches here upon a secret spring which led to many of his abolition efforts. "I greatly fear," he tells Mr. Stephen, "if Hayti grants to France a colonial monopoly in return for the recognition of its independence, that all commerce with us will be excluded, and with it our best hopes of introducing true religion into the island. Now I will frankly own to you, that to introduce religion appears to me the greatest of all benefits. I blame myself for not having earlier stated to you my feelings on this head. It has not arisen from a want of reflection, for my principles have always been the same. God grant we may not hinder the Gospel of Christ. Oh! remember that the salvation of one soul is of more worth than the mere temporal happiness of thousands or even millions. In this I well know you agree with me entirely."

## CHAPTER XXXIV.

THERE was nothing more remarkable about him than the cheerful spring of his natural affections, even under the heaviest pressure of perplexing business. "There," he said when hurried once almost beyond bearing, calling the attention of a friend to a sudden burst of voices, "how can I be worried by such trifles, when I have such constant remembrances of God's goodness to me?" It was his children playing over head with a noisy glee which would have jarred upon the feelings of almost any one besides himself. Thus amidst his present business he rescued time enough to write to his second son.

"BATTERSEA RISE, *Sept.* 14, 1814.

"MY VERY DEAR — : I do not relish the idea that you are the only one of my children who has not written to me during my absence, and that you should be the only one to whom I should not write : I therefore take up my pen, though but for a very few moments, to assure you that I do not suspect your silence to have risen from the want of affection for me, any more than that which I myself have hitherto observed has proceeded from this source. There is a certain demon called procrastination, who inhabits a castle in the air at Sandgate, as well as at so many other places, and I suspect that you have been carried up some day, (at



the tail of your kite, perhaps,) and lodged in that same habitation, which has fine large rooms in it from which there are beautiful prospects in all directions; and probably you will not quit a dwelling-place that you like so well, till you hear that I am on my way to Sandgate. You would meet the 'to-morrow man' there, (it just occurs to me,) and I hope you will have prevailed on him to tell you the remainder of that pleasant story, a part of which Miss Edgeworth has related, though I greatly fear he would still partake so far of the spirit of the place as to leave a part untold till—to-morrow. But I am trifling sadly, since I am this morning unusually pressed for time. I will therefore only guard my dear boy seriously against procrastination, one of the most dangerous assailants of usefulness, and assure him that I am to-day, to-morrow, and always while I exist,

“His affectionate father,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

It is not a little interesting to turn from public objects which consumed so much of his time and attention to the details of his private life. He soon returned to Sandgate, living in the midst of his children, studying the Scriptures daily with some of them, “walking and reading with them all, and bringing them into the habits he desired, by kind, not violent means.” He was as busy, too, doing good to those around him, as if his sympathies had never wandered from his own immediate circle; entering eagerly into any individual tale of suffering—as when he “heard” this year of a case, (“the shocking account of Mrs. R.’s cruelty to her child,”) which he took up and carried through, at a great expense of time and trouble, and in spite of re-

peated threatenings of personal violence from the brutal parent. He labored too by schools and other institutions to relieve the want and ignorance around him. "The adult school," wrote a friend staying at this time in his family, to Mr. Arthur Young, "is established here; a room and teachers provided, and all will be left in good train. Mr. Wilberforce went himself, read them extracts from Pole's History of Adult Schools, and made them a little speech, saying how much he respected their good sense for coming. You would have been delighted with seeing him seated by the old ladies, with the utmost patience, kindness, and humility, fairly teaching them their letters, and quite unconscious that it was at all more remarkable in him than in any common person. This was beautiful in him, and highly useful and encouraging in its effects upon the institution."

It is no wonder that thus causing and enjoying the present social happiness, he should have "felt melancholy at the idea of breaking up and going to town." But the session was about to open, and duty called him up to London.

"We have seen much of Wilberforce," Mr. Henry Thornton tells Hannah More, "and heard his letters from many of the renowned of the earth, all seeming to pay homage to him. Lord Castlereagh tells him that he has obeyed his commands, and put his book into the hands of each of the sovereigns. Talleyrand's last letter has rather a clearer acknowledgment than before of his sympathy with Wilberforce, as to the grand object. The most happy part of the intelligence is an official assurance of an 'ordonnance' of some sort issued recently by the French government, excluding French slave-traders from all the northern parts of Africa; and

the line is so drawn that Sierra Leone, and all the settlements restored by the treaty with France, as well as a very large district below Sierra Leone, are exempt from their molestations. I almost anticipate more good from these new efforts of our friends than even from the abolition voted here ; and the name of Wilberforce has attained new celebrity, and his character and general opinions a degree of weight, which perhaps no private individual not vested with office ever possessed. My delight has consisted much in observing his Christian simplicity, and the general uniformity in his character and conduct, amidst the multitude of compliments from the great, made on the part of some, with much feeling. He is indeed in his usual bustle, but he reminds me nevertheless of that saying which was applied to Fox, that the greatest objects, or the most heavy load of business, seemed never to put him into that petty tumult which is the common mark of inferior men." His sons say :

The abolition measures which Louis XVIII. either would not or could not carry, were now about to be accomplished by a stronger hand. From his rock of Elba, Bonaparte had not been an unobservant witness of the feelings of this country, which he now probably for the first time believed to be sincere. Upon his sudden return to power, he attempted to ingratiate himself with England by proclaiming a total and immediate abolition of the slave trade. Thus was the bloody cup dashed from the hands of France, and the scourge of Europe became the pacificator of Africa. And when Louis was again restored by British arms, he was not suffered to revive the hateful traffic. "I have the gratification of acquainting you that the long-desired object is accomplished, and that the present messenger carries to Lord Liver-

pool the unqualified and total abolition of the slave trade throughout the dominions of France. I must beg to refer you to his Lordship for the terms in which this has been effected; but I feel great satisfaction in persuading myself that, as they will leave you nothing to desire on the subject, so you will trace in them the undeviating and earnest exertions of the Prince Regent's ministers to effectuate this great object, which had been so impressively given them in charge." It was thus Lord Castlereagh addressed Mr. W. some months later, after the battle of Waterloo, and the final triumph of the allied arms.

Mr. Wilberforce had been long accustomed to make the opening of a new year a time for serious and devotional reflection. After morning service, on Sunday, January 1st, (1815,) "I was much affected," is his entry, "Oh! may it be permanently, by the reflections the seasons suggest. Read in the evening a sermon on the fig-tree a cumberer of the ground, to my family." He was at that time occupying Barham Court, the seat of Lord Barham, and partaking of the holiday employments of his children, while Mr. Thornton occupied his house at Kensington Gore, to be nearer medical advice. Mr. T.'s health, which was at no time robust, had been much weakened by a fit of illness in the autumn; but it was hoped that he was rallying from it, and no apprehensions were expressed of its ultimate result. On the 9th of January, Mr. Wilberforce was "so busy with" his "letters" that he "could hardly find time" to leave the country; "but it would be unkind not to go to town for Henry's sake, if, as they think, I could be any comfort to him." The next day, therefore, he went up "to Kensington Gore, but did not see dear Henry till the next morning for fear

of flurrying him." He had come to town with no idea that his friend was in any danger, and was "shocked" therefore "to hear" when he "saw Halford early the next morning, that a sad change had taken place within the last five or six days; inflammation going towards the heart, and the greatest danger. I ordered myself to be refused to all but particular friends. Dealtry and I up praying with Henry and Mrs. and Miss Thornton."

"My mind," he tells a friend at the conclusion of a business letter, "is in reality engrossed all this time by a different subject, and I scarcely need tell you that it is the loss of one of my oldest, kindest, most intimate, and most valuable friends. His death is indeed a loss, though so much more to poor Mrs. Henry Thornton than to any of us, that all comparison is at an end. However, the old, well-worn consolation is not worn out, our loss is his gain, and we should indeed be selfish if we could even wish to call our friend back to inhabit once more an emaciated, suffering body, from the far different scene on which he has now entered. I knew my deceased friend well, and I can truly say, after living in the same house with him for several years, and on terms of the closest intimacy and the most unreserved and unintermitted society for eighteen or nineteen subsequently, that a more upright character I never knew—taking the word in the largest sense, as expressing the fulfillment of every duty, and the cultivation of every Christian grace and moral virtue on right principles. To me who was used to consult with him on all public questions, and who profited so often from the extraordinary superiority of his understanding, the loss is almost irreparable. But it is the will of the Almighty, and it becomes us to submit. It is the ordination of infinite wisdom and goodness, and it be-

comes us to say: Thy will be done. I will not apologize for the serious strain of my letter, because I am persuaded you would wish me to pour forth of the fullness of my heart."

Another blow soon followed. There was not perhaps any one amongst his younger friends whom he loved and respected as he did John Bowdler. "I loved him so warmly," he says when four busy years with all their obliterating influences had passed by since his death, "that it quite delights me to find him estimated at his true value. If poor Kirke White had lived, he might have grown into something of the same kind. But Bowdler had a dignity—he would have become capable, I assure you, of thundering and lightening. And then he was the tenderest, and the humblest, and the most self-forgetting creature." Bowdler, too, had just been mourning with him. On the sorrowful day which followed Henry Thornton's death, Mrs. Thornton had "sent for him. He came in the evening, and I had much talk with him. I took him to town next morning." It was the last time they met on earth. The very next day, "about one in the morning, dear Bowdler burst a blood-vessel, and until about seven, when his bed-maker came in, he lay in his chamber, humanly speaking, in the most desolate state. Yet he told C. afterwards, that his mind was then so filled with the Saviour, that he thought of nothing else." Such was the color of his thoughts for the ten following days, during which he meekly bore the sudden breaking up of the strongest natural affections, and the highest intellectual powers. Upon the 31st of January, he was pronounced "better, the inflammation of the lungs subdued, and its conquest thought a great point." Yet on the following evening, when Mrs. Henry Thornton's

business had again carried Mr. Wilberforce to town, "a note came to" him at seven, "telling me of dear Bowdler's death, at twelve o'clock this morning. Oh! how little did I foresee, when we met lately at Kensington Gore, that it would be the last time of my intercourse with him on earth! O sit anima mea cum Bowdlero. I went on to Grosvenor Square, and saw his lifeless and ghastly frame."

To Hannah More, a few days later, he pours out his heart.

"LONDON, *Feb.* 11, 1815.

"MY DEAR FRIEND: Scarcely had a week passed away after the death of our dear friend Henry Thornton, before the excellent and elevated Bowdler was called out of this world, only less dear a friend as of more recent acquisition; and scarcely had we returned from his funeral, . . though there also I speak figuratively, because I was unable to attend, from the continuance of the same indisposition which kept me from joining in the same sad office to my earlier friend, . . when the tidings arrive of the departure of Dr. Buchanan. How striking! We are all involuntarily looking round and asking with an inquiring eye: Who next, Lord? Oh! may the warnings have their due effect in rendering us fit for the summons. But I at this moment recollect some important and urgent claims on my time (too little for them) before I must go out of town, and I must therefore break off unwillingly, for my stream of thought was in full flow, and it beats against the barrier. Kindest remembrances. Farewell. I inclose the half of a bank-note; the remainder shall follow.

"Yours ever most sincerely,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

These deep tones of manly affection are strikingly contrasted with his lowly estimation of himself. On Sunday, February 12th, he was at Battersea Rise, and received the "Sacrament. Mrs. H. Thornton staid for the first time since her husband's death, and was much affected. Indeed, so hard a creature as myself was so. What letters did I see yesterday—one quite exquisite from M. How wonderfully the power of true Christianity is displayed in the tempers, feelings, and even reflections of the several sufferers! Harford, one of them, having lost a beloved father, indicated the same blessed sentiments and feelings." To this friend he wrote two days later :

*To J. S. Harford, Esq.*

"KENSINGTON GORE, *Feb.* 14, 1815.

"MY DEAR SIR: Even by those who think and feel concerning the events of this checkered life as real Christians, such an incident as the death of a parent, or even of a near and dear friend, will be felt severely; and indeed it ought to be so felt, for here, as in so many other instances, it is the glorious privilege of Christianity and the evidence of its superior excellence, that it does not, like the systems of human fabrication, strive to extinguish our natural feelings, from a consciousness that it is only by lessening them that it can deal with them, if I may so express myself, and enable us to bear the misfortune as we ought, but it so softens, and sweetens, and increases the sensibility of our hearts, as to make us love our friends better and feel more keenly for the whole of this life the loss of our former delightful intercourse with them, and yet at the same time it so spiritualizes and elevates our minds as to



cheer us amidst all our sorrows ; and enabling us, on these as on other occasions, to walk by faith and live by the Spirit, it raises us to the level of our ascended friends, till we hear almost their first song of exultation, and would not even wish to interrupt it, while we rather indulge the humble hope of one day joining in the chorus.

“ Yet the loss of so excellent a man as Bowdler, at what seemed to us so premature a period, when we might have hoped that for so many succeeding years the world would be instructed by his wisdom, and charmed by his eloquence, and above all, edified and improved by his example, must be deeply felt by the survivors. And even in the case of Mr. Henry Thornton, I at least may naturally feel this, who was of the same age ; much, it might be hoped, still remained for him to do for the benefit of his fellow-creatures and the glory of God. And Buchanan too ! but I am silent. . .”

## CHAPTER XXXV.

THE energy and decision of his character was exhibited strikingly during the period at which the public discontent ran so high on the question of Corn Laws; some extracts from his diary will illustrate at one view the excitement of the times and his own feelings on the occasion. "March 6th. House. Corn Bill in committee—sad rioting at night. Both doors of the carriage, which set down members, opened, and member pulled out. None much injured. 8th. House—Report of Corn Bill and tendency to riot. 9th. House. Some mobbing, and people savage and inveterate—alas! alas! Charles Grant, and Mr. Arthur Young, the agriculturist, slept with us for security on Tuesday." Mr. Young was now entirely blind, and found his chief pleasure in such society as that which he continually found in Mr. Wilberforce's house. "He says that in his present state of Egyptian darkness, Kensington Gore is still like the land of Goshen to him; and that while he has the hope of hearing Mr. Wilberforce's voice, he will not say that he finds 'change of place, no change of scene.'"

"At my prayers this morning," his diary continues, "March 10th, I reflected seriously if it was not my duty to declare my opinions in favor of the Corn Bill, on the principle of providing things honest in the sight of all

men, and adorning the doctrine of God my Saviour in all things. I decided to do it. I see people wonder I do not speak one way or the other. It will be said, he professes to trust in God's protection, but he would not venture any thing. Then I shall have religious questions and moral questions, to which my speaking will conciliate, and contra, my silence strongly indispose men. Besides, it is only fair to the government, when I really think them right, to say so, as an independent man not liable to the imputation of party bias, corrupt agreement with landed interest, etc. ; so I prepared this morning and spoke, and though I lost my notes, and forgot much I meant to say, I gave satisfaction." "I am sure that in coming forward, I performed a very painful act of duty, from a desire to please God, and to serve the interests of religion, and I humbly trust God will protect me and my house and family. If not, His will be done." "Sir Joseph Banks's house sadly treated; all his papers burnt, and his house nearly being so."

A letter to his eldest son, now seventeen years old, enters into more particulars.

"LONDON, *March* 15, 1815.

"MY VERY DEAR W.: I do not recollect with any precision when I last wrote to you, but my feelings have been for some days intimating to me that it is long, too long, since we either of us heard from the other, and therefore I gladly avail myself of a leisure half-hour, which I enjoy in consequence of Mr. Whitbread's, or rather of Lord Castlereagh's business being put off, to dispatch a letter to Aspeden.

"You did not mention, I think, the subject of your declamation—I wish you had, and shall be glad if you will

name it in your next letter to me or your mother. What are the speculations of the Aspeden politicians on the escape of Bonaparte? We old hands are, if we would confess it, as much at a loss as you what predictions to utter. In short, I for one have learnt from experience to be very diffident in my speculations on future events. It is, however, an unspeakable comfort in such circumstances to be assured that able, and active, and wicked as Bonaparte is, he is no less under the Divine control than the weakest of human beings. He is executing, unconsciously, the Divine will; and it is probably because the sufferings which he before brought upon the nations of Europe did not produce the intended effect of humiliation and reformation, that he is allowed once more to stalk abroad and increase the sum of human misery.

“Were you to enter the dining-room at family prayer time without having received some explanation of our appearance, you would probably begin to think that we were expecting a visit from the ex-emperor and his followers at Kensington Gore, and had prepared a military force to repel his assault. For you would see four soldiers and a sergeant, together with another stranger, who as far as bodily strength would go, would play his part as well as any of them. The fact is, that we had some reason to apprehend mischief for our house, in consequence of the part which I judged it my duty to take on the Corn Bill; and as your mother, etc., was advised to evacuate the place, I preferred the expedient which had been adopted by Mr. Bankes, and several others of my friends, that of having four or five soldiers in my house—the very knowledge of their being there, rendering an attack improbable. But it was a curious instance of the rapid circulation of intelligence, that at Covent Garden market early on Saturday morning,

John Sharman, who sells garden-stuff, being there to purchase for the supply of his shop, was hooted after, with 'So your old master has spoken for the Corn Bill,' (I had spoken only the night before,) 'but his house shall pay for it.' All, however, is hitherto quiet, and I trust will continue so. But I was aware of the danger when (to you I may say, it was at my prayers) I resolved to speak for the Bill; but I judged it my duty to show that I was in favor of the measure, (though thinking 76*s.* a preferable importation price to 80*s.*) I thought that if I remained silent, many might say Mr. Wilberforce professes to trust in the protection of God, but you see when there is danger to be apprehended from speaking out, he takes care to protect himself by being silent. Again, I sometimes need parliamentary support for measures of a class not so popular as some others, as missionary questions, or any others of a religious kind. Now by coming forward and speaking my mind on the present occasion, I knew I should render people better disposed to support me in any of these cases, while on the other hand my remaining silent and snug as it might have been termed, would have produced a contrary disposition. I acted, in short, on the principle of 'providing things honest in the sight of all men, and of adorning the doctrine of God our Saviour.' But observe, I was clear in my judgment in favor of the Bill.

"I did not intend to give you this long history. And as I have expended all my own time, and have trespassed on yours, I must hasten to a conclusion, not however without a few words to assure my dear — how often I think of him, how often pray for him. O my dearest boy! let me earnestly conjure you not to be seduced into neglecting, curtailing, or hurrying over

your morning prayers. Of all things guard against neglecting God in the closet. There is nothing more fatal to the life and power of religion ; nothing which makes God more certainly withdraw His grace. Farewell, my beloved —, my first born : and O my dearest boy ! bear in mind what a source either of joy or sorrow you will be to your affectionate mother, and

“ Your affectionate father and friend,

“ W. WILBERFORCE.

“ P. S.—Kind remembrances to any young friend that I know.”

His journal continues on the 14th of March : “ All quite quiet here, but sad accounts from France ; Bonaparte having got to Lyons, and Horner anticipating the worst. The soldiers (Scotch) behave extremely well ; they come in to prayers, and pleased to do so.”

In the midst of much daily business, encountered with the utmost diligence, comes in the result of a Sunday's self-examination. “ April 10th. I humbly hope that I enjoyed yesterday more of a Christian feeling of faith, and hope, and love, than of late. But I have been to blame in point of hours. Lord, forgive my past unprofitableness, and enable me to mend in future. 21st. Being unwell, I kept the house, but busy on letters, and chiefly African Institution Report ; and occupied evening. Committee on Lascars' business called just when dinner going on table. I too faint, and, alas ! impatient, forgetting Christ's talking with the woman of Samaria, and neglecting the solicitations of hunger, and the distress of faintness.”

“ May 3d. Anniversary of Bible Society. It went off well. Robert Grant spoke beautifully. I was well received, but very moderate in real performance. As

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I came out, a truly pleasing Quaker accosted me, and with the true *friends'* frankness and kindness, without any thing of forwardness and vulgarity, asked me concerning peace or war, 'having been much exercised about conferring with me' on that topic, wishing me 'to become a fool that I might be wise,' etc. I walked with him some time, and was affected to tears. 10th. Early to see Lords Castlereagh and Liverpool about Abolition and St. Domingo. Castlereagh clear that the Bourbon government will never revive the trade. I hear everywhere that the Duke of Wellington is in high spirits. I am distressed and puzzled about politics; but surely without being clear it would not be right to oppose the government. If Bonaparte could be unhorsed, it would, humanly speaking, be a blessing to the European world; indeed, to all nations. And government ought to know both his force and their own. Yet I greatly dread their being deceived, remembering how Pitt was. 29th. Wordsworth the poet breakfasted with us, and walked garden—and it being the first time, staid long—much pleased with him."

"June 1st. A report to-day from Brussels that it is still said there will be no fighting; Bonaparte will retire—surely there is no ground for this idea. 7th. House. Notice about Register Bill. 8th. Duke of Gloucester's on Registry Bill—Lords Grenville and Lansdown, Romilly, Calthorpe, Horner, William Smith, Stephen, Babington, and Macaulay. I against bringing on the measure this year. But Grenville strongly for it, and all the rest gave way. 9th. First quiet thought of the plan of my speech for Tuesday. Then African Institution, Captured Negroes' committee. Then House. Dined Sir G. Beaumont's to meet Wordsworth, who very manly, sensible, and full of knowledge, but inde-

pendent almost to rudeness. 12th. Off early to Stephen's, Chelsea, to prepare for motion; any quiet time here being next to impossible. 13th. Busy preparing all morning; but not having settled plan of speech before, much less finishings, I felt no confidence. Got through pretty well, speaking an hour and fifty minutes."

Sunday, the 18th, was spent at the parsonage of Taplow, where his family had been staying for a week. It is described in his diary as "a quiet day." Above measure did he enjoy its quietness. He seemed to shake off with delight the dust and bustle of the crowded city; and as he walked up the rising street of the village on his way to the old church of Taplow, he called on all around to rejoice with him in the visible goodness of his God; and "perhaps," he said to his children, "at this very moment when we are walking thus in peace together to the house of God, our brave fellows may be fighting hard in Belgium. Oh! how grateful should we be for all God's goodness to us!" The next day he "returned to London for Lord Rosebery's Divorce Bill, *religionis causâ*;" and almost the first news which met him showed that his grateful reflections on the Sunday had been uttered whilst the battle of Waterloo was being fought. "22d. Dr. Wellesley came and told us of the Duke of Wellington's splendid victory of the 18th." "A dreadful battle," he writes word to Taplow. "British victorious; but great loss. Duke of Brunswick and Lord Errol's eldest son killed. We are said to have lost 25,000, the French 50,000. Oh! my heart sickens at the scene! Yet praise God for this wonderful victory."

On Saturday, the 24th, he again plunged into the country, but hastened back upon the Monday, for "the



Duke of Wellington's reward ; I preferring infinitely a palace to be built, to buying one ready made. 28th. Breakfasters again—Sanders, a black man—Spanish, Blanco White ; yesterday Prince Blucher's aide-de-camp who had brought the dispatches—desired by Blucher several times over to let me know all that passed." "Did Marshal Blucher," he was asked at his audience by the Regent, "give you any other charge?" "Yes, sir ; he charged me to acquaint Mr. Wilberforce with all that had passed." "Go to him then yourself by all means," was the Prince's answer, "you will be delighted with him." The veteran soldier's lively recollection of the efforts made in the preceding year to succor his afflicted countrymen, is highly to his honor. "I have fought," he wrote to the managing committee, "two pitched battles, five engagements, masked three fortresses, taken two ; but I have lost 22,000 men. Will the people of England be satisfied with me now ? Desire Mr. Wilberforce to bestir himself." Though he had lately lamented his forgetfulness, and begged a friend "to act always as his flapper," he needed in truth no such assistance. He took at this time the leading part in another meeting for the Germans, and in the midst of his busiest preparations for the introduction of his Registry Bill he "came back and took the chair at a private meeting of the neighbors, for a fund, raising for the widows and children of the killed and wounded of the 1st Life Guards always quartered at Knightsbridge—a small meeting, but cordial." His sons remark :

"A grateful remembrance of the gallant services of our soldiers and our sailors was deeply wrought into his mind, and appeared often in his conversation ; as when he said to a friend: 'I never see a soldier or a

sailor without a mingled feeling of gratitude and compassion. I think of the privations they suffer, and of the dangers, moral as well as physical, to which they are exposed in our defense, while we are comfortably at home by our firesides, enjoying freely our domestic blessings and our Christian advantages.' Or when at another time the conversation turned upon the beauties of our English villas. 'I must speak,' he said, 'of the comfort and security of English cottages. It is delightful to think how many there are in this country who though having no title to personal security from the extent or importance of their possessions, are so completely guarded in their little nooks and tenements by the power of the law, that they can enjoy undisturbed every comfort of life as securely as the first peer in the land. I delight to see, as one sometimes does, an old worn-out sailor—poor fellow! seated in his queer, boat-like summer-house, smoking his pipe, and enjoying himself in a state of the most happy independence.' "

## CHAPTER XXXVI.

LEAVING his family at Brighton, accompanied by Mrs. Henry Thornton, who was rapidly declining with consumption, he made a tour through the south-western counties with his eldest son and a college friend. His birth-day, which occurred during this tour, was passed at the house of a friend. "I had hoped," he says, "to get much time for private devotions on this most important and humiliating day; but partly through my own fault, partly through dear W. keeping me in his room, I had very little. Yet I hope the season has not elapsed without serious reflection; and as iron sharpeneth iron, oh! may my spirit be incited by the good men here. W.'s little one, my godson, received into the Church. Dear W. all Christian fervor and love, but rather too fanciful; yet oh! how far removed from the excesses of our dear —. There it is self-conceit operating through the medium of religious doctrines. If ever knowledge puffeth up, how much more self-sufficiency! I am tempted to waste time in W.'s library—an immense variety, especially of old divinity." Such was the charity, "hoping all things," which marked his character, and which led Mr. Wilberforce at this same period, on the occasion of the melancholy suicide of Whitbread, to express in his place in the House of Commons, his admiration of his entirely English character,

though but a few weeks previously he had been "reproached by him ill-naturedly," with being "ungrateful." After this tour, he found an immense accumulation of letters waiting his return. "How can I clear away the arrear; surely it would cost a month to do it, and is it *tanti*? Yet courtesy is a Christian duty. My time slides insensibly away, and though I get little done, I really have too little air and exercise," is the entry he makes in his diary. Many of these letters were upon subjects of the highest importance, such as "the state of religion in Ceylon," "the slave trade," and the persecution to which the Protestants of France were exposed. He was much urged to promote the holding of public meetings on this subject; but having ascertained from Lord Liverpool, at that time at the head of government, that our Government had exerted itself with the French Government, and the French Government with its subjects; he advised there should be no excitement in Great Britain, as "there would be danger of rendering the Protestant cause in general, schools and all, unpopular in France, from being connected with England. They would say we were forcing our religion on them, whereas if we left them alone, the bulk, who are indifferent in religion, and friends to the charter, would be friendly to the Protestants." But he "approved of subscribing for them, guarding against misapplying the money." Such concerns, however, were not his only occupation. A college friend of his son, an invalid, was confided to his care and required attention, and the widow of his friend Henry Thornton was still with his family, and sank rapidly after their return from a tour he made for her benefit through the south-western counties. From her dying-bed he went on the last morning of her life, to a meeting of the Brighton

Auxiliary Bible Society. When he entered the room, says an eye-witness, "he seemed so pale and fatigued, that his friends feared he would scarcely be able to speak. But he no sooner entered on the subject than his countenance was lighted up; he became animated and impressive." "Had it not been," he said, "for one painful circumstance, it was not my intention to have been present at the meeting to-day, for I have been compelled to curb the zeal which I always feel to be present on occasions like this, by making it a rule with myself to decline being present at such meetings, at places of which I am not a regular inhabitant, that I may not become too obvious and intrusive. But to-day I have broken this rule, for I am just come from a scene in which the value of the book which it is your object to disperse, is displayed as with a sunbeam. I dare not withhold such a testimony as it furnishes to the healing and victorious efficacy of the inspired volume. I am come from a chamber in which a widowed mother, surrounded by her soon to become orphaned family, is enabled to look the last enemy calmly in the face; herself possessing a peace which even the waves of Jordan can not ruffle, because it is the gift of God; her children, in some degree, enabled to anticipate for her the hope of glory. It is a scene which must be witnessed, to produce its full effect upon the heart; a scene such as, if I had not myself witnessed, I could not adequately have imagined—a happiness felt in the moments of deepest outward dejection and sorrow, an elevation above the evils and trials of this mortal life. Trials, did I call them? Triumphs, let me rather say, of the believer's faith. And let me ask, is this consolation in affliction, this hope in death, any thing peculiar to their particular circumstances or temper of mind?

any family secret which they alone possess, and from which men in general are excluded? No, sir. It is that which the blessed word of God offers to all who will embrace it. And, therefore, how could I but come and congratulate you, and this assembly, on being permitted to be the honored instruments of the Almighty in diffusing such a cordial as this through a dying world? How could I but rejoice in being allowed to join with you in endeavoring to circulate these imperishable blessings? It is true indeed, some tears of mortality will fall, when we see a friend descending into the dark valley of the shadow of death, and the mortal frame suffering its last agonies. 'Jesus wept,' and He will allow His people to weep also. He will pardon and pity the tears we shed from human infirmity. But notwithstanding this natural sorrow, it is the blessed privilege of the work in which we are engaged, that whilst its end is glory to God in the highest, the way by which it conducts us is pleasantness and peace; and it gives us substantial victory over that last enemy, whom, sooner or later, we must all of us individually encounter. For it is not only in the din and confusion of battle, that the spirit may be so raised as to brave danger and not to turn the eye away from death when it stares you in the face. This may arise from the mere excitement of the occasion, or from driving away all thought about the consequences of death. But in the cool and silent hours of reflection, a nobler and more genuine courage may be evinced; and in the chamber of sickness, and from the bed of death, the soul, leaning on the word of her God, may meet that enemy without alarm, and calmly say: O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?"

"Never, surely," was his private reflection, "was

there such a tranquil scene as Mrs. H. T.'s death." "I am almost tempted to think I see a present explanation of the mysterious providence by which the mother of these nine orphans has been taken away, when I witness the depth of piety which it has made manifest. It is a fine remark, I think of Bishop Butler's, that though there be no pain, nor cause for resignation in heaven, there may be benefits from resignation, and other tempers which earthly pain has contributed to produce." Having attended the body to London, business and friends gathered around him before he could again re-join his family. He writes to them : "The good Dean's old saying has been already a little verified : that, I mean, of my drawing a tail to me wherever I may be. C., and dear Lord Teignmouth, have been here, and they, and I believe three more, are to dine here at half-past four." And on Sunday he writes to his family at the close of a note : "I will use my pen no more than to express what, however, I express much more largely on my knees—my earnest wishes that God's best blessings may be ever strewed abundantly on you all. Oh! how blessed will be that day, when after all our conflicts and anxieties, we shall be made partakers of that rest which remaineth for the people of God! Oh! let us strive lest a promise being left us of entering into His rest, any of us should seem to come short of it. But if we give diligence to make our calling and election sure, we never shall, we never can fail, for the promises of the God of truth are pledges of our security. But let us all remember that if we would be admitted hereafter into heaven, we must be made meet for it here. That striking passage in the 8th of Romans, quite haunts me. 'If any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His.' Oh! let this thought

quicken our endeavors and our prayers." Having returned to Brighton, he complains: "I can not even read during the day all the letters which the morning's post has heaped upon me: twice within the last few days I have had five or six packets beyond my number."

In the midst of these over-occupations, he perceived with no great pleasure a new feature of resemblance added to "Piccadilly by the sea-side," in the presence of the Prince Regent, and the consequent claims of the court and society upon his straitened time on his return to Brighton. "I at the Pavillon once. The ministers have been down with the Prince for two or three days each. Lord Sidmouth and Bathurst called on me yesterday. Lord Castlereagh before." "The Prince and Duke of Clarence, too, very civil. Prince showed he had read Cobbett. Spoke strongly of the blasphemy of his late papers, and most justly. I was asked again last night, and to-night; but declined, not being well." This excuse, however, would not long serve, and three days afterwards he was again "at the Pavillon—the Prince came up to me and reminded me of my singing at the Duchess of Devonshire's ball in 1782, of the particular song, and of our then first knowing each other." "We are both, I trust, much altered since, sir," was his answer. "Yes, the time which has gone by must have made a great alteration in us." "Something better than that, too, I trust, sir." "He then asked me to dine with him the next day, assuring me that I should hear nothing in his house to give me pain, . . . alluding to a rash expression of one of his train, when I declined the other day: 'Mr. Wilberforce will not dine with you, sir,' . . . that even if there should be at another time, there should not be when I was there. At dinner I sat between Lord Ellenborough and Sir James Graham. The Prince



desired I might be brought forward." The invitations of the Prince Regent were in truth commands which could not with propriety be disobeyed. To Miss Thornton, he writes: "I conceived, that by a friendly intervention of Gen. Bloomfield, I had provided against this evil: and I can only say that if the invitation is to be repeated, I shall soon say farewell to Brighton." And to Hannah More he says, after mentioning the attention with which he was treated: "Poor fellow! How I longed for a private half-hour with him. Oh! how I sympathize with good old Baxter, in feeling peculiar pity for the great and high of the earth."

"At night, in coming away, I opened to Bloomfield, very civilly, as I am sure I ought, saying I felt the Prince's kindness, but told him that it was inconvenient to me to come to the Pavilion often—children causâ. He at once said, I understand you. When I next saw the Prince, he gave me a kind and general invitation. I heard afterwards that Lord Ellenborough was asked to Pavilion expressly to meet me. I was glad to hear it, as indicating that I was deemed particular as to my company." Several times in the ensuing weeks he was again a guest at the Pavilion, and met always with the same treatment. He remarks: "The Prince is quite the English gentleman at the head of his own table." "I was consulted by the Queen's desire, whether proper to keep the Queen's birth-day, which fell on the thanksgiving-day. I replied that not wrong, but rather doubtful. I went myself, being forced to obey the sergeant and summons, otherwise should have deemed it for me ineligible, and therefore wrong."

"No, my dear Stephen," he wrote, at this time in reply to the playful taunt, "you will live to be a peer at last," "I am not afraid of declaring that I shall go out

of the world plain William Wilberforce. In one view, indeed, I seldom have had less reason to be dissatisfied with that less dignified style : I mean in the degree of civility or even respect to which even plain W. W. may be deemed entitled. For really had I been covered with titles and ribbons, I could not have been treated with more real, unaffected, unapparently condescending, and therefore more unostentatious civility. But, alas ! still better reasons suggest the same dispositions. I become more and more impressed with the truth of good old Baxter's declaration, that 'the great and the rich of this world are much to be pitied ;' and I am continually thankful for not having been led to obtain a station which would have placed my children in circumstances of greatly increased danger."

On the first Sunday after his return to London, he says : "I am fresh from Brighton, a place much to be avoided in the winter, except for some special purposes—wishing to see the Prince, or some other persons, whom one would meet only there. It must be a bad place for the generality of young women ; infusing a pleasure-loving, dissipated spirit. How different this from crucifying the flesh with the affections and lusts, and making no preparation for the flesh to fulfill the lusts thereof ! How ill-suited to the baptismal engagement to resist the pomps and vanities of this wicked world ! I find it steals on myself, though so advanced in years."

With him and his, meanwhile, the year had closed with thoughts of soberness and prayer. "What a change has a single year and less, made in the circle of my acquaintance ! Mr. Henry Thornton and his widow, and their excellent young friend and mine, Mr. Bowdler, who was carried off just when he was about to be married to the daughter of another friend. Mrs. Henry

Thornton dying at this place, it was my privilege to be much with her in her latter days, and a more peaceful, humble, grateful, hopeful death, I can not conceive. 'I trust,' she said a few days before her decease, 'God is gently leading me to that blessed world which He has prepared for those that love Him.' I thank God we are well. We overflow with blessings."

"Sunday, Dec. 31st. Church morning. After church, we and our six children together—I addressed them all collected, and afterwards solemn prayer. How little likely on the 30th May, 1797, when I married, that we and all our six children (we never had another) should all be living, and well! Praise the Lord, O my soul!"

## CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE year 1816 opened with a storm of opposition to all his plans connected with the question of the Slave Trade, well fitted to try the firmness and ascertain the reality of his principles. Though he made some of his most able speeches in Parliament on occasion of an insurrection among the slaves in Barbadoes, yet throughout the session he took a less active part in general public business than usual.

It would have been comparatively easy to throw aside one or two attacks upon his character, but it became a real trial of his principles when they were daily repeated throughout years of patient perseverance in efforts for the good of others; when scandalous insinuations were multiplied, and every day produced a new set of slanders of such an aggravated kind, that "if they had been true," he told the House of Commons, "nothing but a special Providence could have prevented my being hanged full thirty years ago." Yet he stood the trial; never in his most unguarded hours did he manifest any bitterness of feeling; never in public was he led into angry recrimination. Often did he provoke some of his more impetuous colleagues by taking the part of the West-Indian planter—suggesting excuses for his conduct—alleging that there was no class of persons whom it was so much the

interest of the actual managers to keep in darkness as to the abuses of the system—and so extenuating their moral guilt that he drew upon himself a portion of the storm which lowered over his West-Indian slanderers. His severest public answer was an apt quotation of the words of Gibbon to an abusive assailant: "Every animal employs the note, or cry, or howl, which is peculiar to its species; every man expresses himself in the dialect most congenial to his temper and inclination, the most familiar to the company in which he has lived, and to the authors with whom he is conversant."

A complaint on his chest hung upon him obstinately, at this time, and made him "fear that I shall do little more good. Alas! that I have not labored more to make the best use of my faculties." "It is a stroke which I own I feel; not I hope with a rebellious but with a humbled will; yet I trust it may still please God to enable me to use my organs (and oh! that it might be better in all ways) in His service, and for the benefit of my fellow-creatures." He was obliged for the most part to confine his exertions in the House to his "own proper business," and to questions of a moral cast. As "a chamber counsel" he was still laboring diligently. Every year multiplied the private claimants on his time, and this year they abounded, from the tale of ordinary distress, and the throng of "breakfasters," to the "Duke of Kent who more than once called" on him "for two hours about his affairs, and why going abroad—hardly used." On some few great occasions he came forward, and always with effect; and at the end of the session he took an active part in the exertions which were made to provide relief for the pressing distresses of the times.

Lowestoft on the Suffolk coast was the scene of his

summer retirement with his family. He had spent but a few weeks there and in its neighborhood, when he was called suddenly away by the illness of a friend. "In how different a congregation," he writes to his family on the first Sunday he now spent at Bath, "have I been from that of Pakefield! It reminded me of the difference between the twelve poor fishermen, (I did not till now recollect that yours are literally such,) who constituted the first assemblages of Christians, and the well-dressed and well-mannered meetings of the high and the literary, who used to congregate for their various purposes of private devotion or instruction. Though I make it an invariable rule not to write letters on the Sunday, except in cases of necessity and charity, yet on the principle of charity I may send you a few friendly lines. I need not assure you that on this day you are all much in my thoughts. I hope you all feel grateful for being brought at once into so friendly an intimacy with so excellent a family as that at Earlham.\* For my part I am still full of Earlham, or rather of its inhabitants. One of our great astronomers has stated it as probable that there may be stars whose light has been travelling to us from the creation, and has not yet reached our little planet; and thus some have accounted for new stars first observed by more recent astronomers. In this Earlham family a new constellation has broke upon us, for which you must invent a name as you are fond of star-gazing; and if it indicate a little monstrosity, (as they are apt to give the collections of stars the names of strange creatures, dragons, and bears, etc.,) the various parts of which the Earl-

\* Joseph John Gurney's.

ham assemblage\* is made up, may justify some name indicative of queer combinations; only let it include also all that is to be esteemed, and loved, and respected too, and coveted."

Before he had spent many days at Bath he received a hasty summons to attend upon his sister, who had been suddenly attacked by dangerous sickness. It was a great shock to him. His other sisters had been so early taken from them, that there had been none to share or to divide the affection for each other, which had grown in them with their growth and years. Her affectionate admiration of her brother had been rarely equalled, and affection was never wasted upon him. He had parted with her a few weeks before at Cambridge, and rejoiced "to see her better than she had been for a long time past." He was therefore unprepared for such a blow, and set off immediately with a heavy heart for Sunning Hill. "On arriving heard that my sister had died yesterday at four o'clock. Poor Stephen much affected! Liable to strong paroxysms, at other times calm and pretty cheerful. I prayed by my dear sister's body, and with the face uncovered. Its fixedness very awful. I sat all the evening engaging Stephen, while the coffin was adjusting below. How affecting all these things; how little does the immortal spirit regard it! Looking at night, till near two o'clock this morning, over my dear sister's letters—many to and from myself, when she and I first in earnest in religion."

"Our separation from each other just at this time," he writes to Lowestoft, "if it produces some pain, yet

\* Amongst the "large party" at the dinner-table he mentions the Bishop of Norwich, Col. B. and Lady Emily, Mr. Buxton, Mr. Cunningham, Mr. Hudson Gurney, etc.

reminds us of the call we have for gratitude to the Father of mercies, who has so long spared us to each other. How can I but feel this, when our dear friend's solitary situation is so forcibly impressed on me! I indeed have lost a most affectionate sister, one, of whom I can truly say, that I believe there never was on earth a more tenderly attached, generous, and faithful friend to a brother, who, though I hope not insensible to her value, saw but little of her to maintain her affection, and of whom, alas! I could say much that might reasonably have abated the force and cooled the warmth of her attachment.

“How affecting it is to leave the person we have known all our lives, on whom we should have been afraid to let the wind blow too roughly, to leave her in the cold ground alone! This quite strikes my imagination always on such occasions. But there is another thing which has impressed itself in the present instance much more powerfully than in any other I ever remember, I mean in contemplating the face of our dead friend to observe the fixed immovableness of the features. Perhaps it struck me more in my sister's case because her countenance owed more of the effect it produced to the play of features than to their formation. I could not get rid of the effect produced on me by this stiff and cold fixedness for a long time. But oh! it is the spirit, the inhabitant of the earthly tenement, not the tenement itself, which was the real object of our affection. How unspeakably valuable are the Christian doctrines and hopes, in such circumstances as ours! We should not care much, if we believed that the object of our tender regard had gone a few days before us a journey we ourselves should travel; especially if we knew that the journey's end was to be a lasting abode of perfect



happiness. Now blessed be God, this is after all not an illustration. It is the reality. The only drawback with me here is the consciousness that I have much to do for God, and the self-reproach for not having done it. Yet here also I can cast myself on the sure mercies of my God and Saviour; and while I desire to do on each day the day's proper work, and to be more active and useful than I ever yet have been, still I can humbly hope that if I should be taken hence with my work unfulfilled, He who said, 'Thou didst well that it was in thine heart,' will graciously forgive my sins; and that my all-merciful Saviour will take me to himself out of the same superabundant goodness, which I have ever experienced. For how true it is, (I am often driven to this,) 'Thy thoughts are not as our thoughts, nor Thy ways as our ways; for as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are Thy ways higher than our ways, and Thy thoughts than our thoughts!'

"I think I told you that my dear sister, when asked whether God comforted her and gave her peace, said: 'Oh! yes, so much so, as quite to put me to shame when I consider what a sinner I am.' She then exclaimed—so like herself, 'I hope this is not cant;' adding, however: 'I am sure it is not all so.'"

After a few days he returned to Bath, and staid in its neighborhood until the 18th of November, when he set out by the London coach to join his family who had returned to Kensington Gore. "Arrived safely D. G. at half-past ten at Kensington Gore, after travelling above 700 miles without a single accident. The boys coming out immediately to me, and receiving me with humiliating kindness—God bless them!"

No private sorrows were allowed to quench the unextinguishable fire of benevolence which ever animated

him to action, and we find him immediately engaged in his usual routine of effort himself, and stimulating others to the same exertion. He was especially anxious to procure the passage of a bill for the Registration of the slaves in the West-India Colonies, which was violently opposed.

It was taken up as a colonial question. A voluntary tax upon every hogshead of sugar which passed the Custom House, was raised by the West-Indians to defeat the measure; and one and all clamored loudly against its proposers. All this tumult of calumny passed over him almost unnoticed. At times, indeed, he nearly roused himself to make some reply, lest they should occupy the public mind, and prejudice his cause. But there is really no trace of any personal feeling in any of his entries.

It was not merely cheerfulness of temper, on which this calm was based; there was a deeper and more sure foundation for this high-minded peacefulness under perpetual provocation. He says: "I get more and more to disrelish these brawlings, and to be less touchy as to my character. This I fear is chiefly from advancing years, and quiescence; something from the decay of natural spirits, and some little I hope from the growing indifference to human estimation, and from an increased value for peace and love. But it is our clear duty to prevent our good being evil spoken of, when we can do this by a fair and calm defense; and I very greatly deplore my not having prepared an answer to Marryatt." His answer to the charge, that he had pledged himself not to interfere with the condition of the slaves, deserves to be recorded. "It is really true," he tells Mr. Stephen, "as I must one day state, (I grieve at my not having answered Marryatt in print; he very wisely never

would enter into controversy on his legs,) that the condition of the West-Indian slaves first drew my attention, and it was in the course of my inquiry, that I was led to Africa and the Abolition. As long ago as in 1781, the very first year of my being in Parliament, and when I was not twenty-two years of age, I wrote a letter to James Gordon, expressing my hopes that some time or other I might become the instrument of breaking, or at least easing the yoke of these poor creatures."

While he was thus not losing any of the interest he had always taken in the condition of the West-Indian slaves, he was not so destitute of judgment as to press this matter on the country to the exclusion of other claims, and at a period when the distress among the poor at home demanded the largest sympathy, and he writes to Mr. Macaulay: "I am very sorry I have not written something in answer to Marryatt; yet had I done so, it would have come out just now when the nation is full of its own grievances, and we might incur the imputation of being indifferent to the sufferings of our countrymen compared with our sensibility when a black skin is in question, etc. When Parliament meets, the whole nation, depend upon it, will be looking for relief from its own burdens, and it would betray an ignorance of all tact to talk to them in such circumstances of the suffering of the slaves in the West-Indies. We should especially guard against appearing to have a world of our own, and to have little sympathy with the sufferings of our countrymen."

At the opening of Parliament upon the 28th of January, he found the political horizon unusually dark, owing to the agitation created by Hunt, Cobbet, and others. "We are here, (in the Secret Committee,)" he writes back to his family, "in the midst of accounts of plots,

etc., but a gracious Providence, I trust, watches over us. Remember to pray in earnest against sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion." His time was fully occupied. "I feel," he writes from the table of the Secret Committee room, "the effects of sitting up too late. But do not be uneasy, I am pretty well. Dear — asks about our Committee, though he very properly checks himself. We are not to divulge; but thus much I may say, though do not let it be repeated out of doors, that the seizing of the ringleaders on Sunday last prevented bloodshed from the Spa Fields mob on Monday. Hunt seems a foolish, mischief-making fellow, but no conspirator, though the tool of worse and deeper villains. Cobbett is the most pernicious of all; but God will bless and keep us, I fear not; and it is highly gratifying that all the truly religious classes have nothing to do with the seditious proceedings. The blasphemous songs and papers of the seditious will disgust all who have any religion, or any decency."

So constant were at this time the calls on his attention that he assures Mr. Roberts: "You have perhaps supposed that now I am no longer a member for Yorkshire I have as much leisure as I can desire for my own enjoyment and the service of my friends. If such was your surmise, never, I assure you, were you more mistaken. I do not find the smallest diminution of the amount of my business, though there is some difference in its nature." Yet in the midst of all this occupation the flow of his kindly natural affections was as warm and free as if his mind was never burdened by a single thought of business. Some of its expressions in his correspondence with his family are peculiarly striking; and his letters, though written often in "those edgings of time, which, like the edgings of cloth or other substances, are their least val-

uable part," are full of thought and manly tenderness. "Mr. R.'s last letter," he writes to Hastings at this time, "suggests to me some very painful fears that ——'s temper has been again ungoverned—dear, dear boy. Though writing at the Committee table with people all around me, I can scarce refrain from tears while I thus write about him. Oh! that he would pray earnestly! How sure I am that he would then be blessed with grace, and be enabled to make our hearts leap for joy. Farewell—a thousand times God bless you all!"

This was the great aim of his parental watchfulness. "Oh! if I could but see them give up their hearts to God," he says of his children in another letter, "I think that I could cheerfully lay down my life." "Above all, my dearest ——," he writes to one of them on his tenth birth-day, "I am anxious to see in you decisive marks of this great change. I come again and again to look and see if it be indeed begun, just as a gardener walks up again and again to examine his fruit trees, and see if his peaches are set, and if they are swelling and becoming larger; finally, if they are becoming ripe and rosy. I would willingly walk barefoot, from this place" (near London) "to Sandgate, to see a clear proof of it in my dear —— at the end of my journey." "May God bless you, and if it be His will, may we be long spared to each other. I am strongly impressed with a persuasion that this will much depend on the goings-on of our children; and as I have often said, let it be with us an argument for growing in grace, that in proportion as we do thus cultivate an interest, if I may so express it, in the court of Heaven, the more we shall insure our children's edification in answer to our earnest prayers."

Upon his busiest days he found time to write to them. "Were it not," he tells one of his daughters, "that my eyes were so weak, and that, in such a state, writing by candlelight does not suit me, especially after a full day's work following a bad night, you would have received a good long letter instead of this sheetling. My last night's wakefulness arose in fact from my thinking on some subjects of deep interest, from which, though I made several efforts, I could not altogether withdraw my thoughts. My mind obeyed me indeed while I continued wide awake, but when I was dropping half asleep it started aside from the serious and composing train of ideas to which I had forced it up; and like a swerving horse chose to go its own way rather than mine. I like to direct my language as well as my thoughts and feeling towards you on a Saturday night, because it serves as a preparation for that more continued mental intercourse with you in which I allow myself on the Sunday. When I was a bachelor, and lived alone, I used to enliven the dullness of a solitary Sunday dinner by mustering my friends around me in idea, and considering how I could benefit any of them; and now how can there be a more suitable employment of a part of the Lord's day, than thus to call my absent children round me? And you, —, and —, will present yourselves to-morrow; and I shall pray that our great heavenly Shepherd will number you amongst the sheep of His pasture, and guide you at last into His fold above."

Many of these letters are highly indicative of his peculiar character of mind, from their cheerfulness subsiding into serious thought as affection stirred the deeper current of his feelings. Thus to one of his younger sons he writes from London :

## "HOUSE OF COMMONS.

"MY DEAR — : I take advantage of a dull speech to come up stairs and chat a little with my dear —, though I heartily regret that I alone can be the speaker, for I should gladly hear my dear boy's voice and see his countenance. Yesterday was the first time of my going to Kensington Gore. I had no comfort there, but many qualms of emptiness when you were all away, and only vacant places to remind me of the want of you. I hope Mr. L. told you that I had tried to get your watch mended in time to go down to you by him, but in vain. A broken limb is not so easily repaired, especially when it is required that the party shall *go* as he did before. I am sorry to hear that the substitute you have is liable to occasional headaches. I hope you will bear this in mind in your treatment of it, and not let it be stunned or stupefied through carelessness.

"My very dear boy, I received no little pleasure from the account which Mr. L. gave of you. I hope that while he is absent from his earthly father, my dear — will look up the more earnestly to that heavenly Father, who watches over all that trust in Him. Try to bring on your brother in all good, ever remembering my advice not to be satisfied with not being unkind, but trying to be positively kind. Above all, remember prayer is the great means of spiritual improvement, and guard as you would against a wild beast which was lying in a bush by which you were to pass, ready to spring on you—guard in a like manner against wandering thoughts when you are at prayer, either by yourself or in the family. Nothing grieves the Spirit more than our willingly suffering our thoughts to wander, and fix themselves on any object which happens at the time to interest us. My God bless and keep you, my very

dear boy. I think that my dear — is greatly improved in bearing little crosses of inclination properly, and I do hope that God will hear my prayers for him and will make him a comfort and support to my declining years. I have indulged the serious train of thought into which I naturally fall in writing to my children; and am ever, my dear —,

“Your most affectionate father,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

Nor was it for his children only that this tenderness of spirit had survived all the chilling influences of a long public life. His affection for his friends was in its degree as strong. “I am writing,” he tells Mrs Wilberforce, “at C.’s, with whom I am come to dine tête-à-tête. He sees no other company, dear fellow, so that it is a great pleasure to him I believe, and must be beneficial also, for me to sit with him as much as I can. You may be sure, therefore, that I do my best in this way. It is a sad encroachment on my time; but I love him more and more, and value him not less. I must copy for you a short passage from Southey’s last letter. ‘I hope from your mention of C. that I was mistaken in representing him to be in a dangerous state of health. Yet when I saw him, I could not but fear that he was not long to be a sojourner on earth. There is an expression in his countenance at times, which has more of heaven than of earth about it; something which is at once inexpressibly sweet and mournful, like the smile of a broken heart.’ Do show this beautiful passage to Mr. Rolliston, who appeared to me to enter fully into C.’s character. Indeed, let all see it as the beautifully tender sentiment, exquisitely expressed, of a very superior man concerning my dear friend. Lord Bacon says,



**"HOUSE OF COMMONS.**

“MY DEAR —: I take advantage of a dull speech to come up stairs and chat a little with my dear —, though I heartily regret that I alone can be the speaker, for I should gladly hear my dear boy’s voice and see his countenance. Yesterday was the first time of my going to Kensington Gore. I had no comfort there, but many qualms of emptiness when you were all away, and only vacant places to remind me of the want of you. I hope Mr. L. told you that I had tried to get your watch mended in time to go down to you by him, but in vain. A broken limb is not so easily repaired, especially when it is required that the party shall go as he did before. I am sorry to hear that the substitute you have is liable to occasional headaches. I hope you will bear this in mind in your treatment of it, and not let it be stunned or stupefied through carelessness.

"My very dear boy, I received no little pleasure from the account which Mr. L. gave of you. I hope to hear from you again while he is absent from his earthly father.

— will look up the more earnestly to that heavenly Father, who watches over all that trust in Him. Bring on your brother in all good, ever giving my advice not to be satisfied with not falling, but trying to be positively kind. Above all, prayer is the great means of spiritual improvement—guard as you would against any temptation springing in a bush by which you might be misled—spring on you—guard against any evil or wrong thinking thoughts when alone—guard against any selfishness or inattention to the needs of others—guard against any

dear boy. I think that he has proved in bearing him, and I do hope that God will and will make him a comfort in his young years. I have indulged in the into which I naturally and am ever, my dear —

"Your ever-loving father"

Not was it for his sake. "You and I of spirit had survived. His subject to support public life. He sees no other way than I own I feel force, "at C's, with the ill-will, and worse tête. He sees no other way on all West-Indian questions, it is a great pleasure to have government as our friends, ficial also, for me though it might become may be sure, there is in danger of going down, It is a sad encroachment on us unless in such critical circumstances and more than once again and again been silent when for you a short time against the democrats, and even hope from especially against party, but for representing that I had to look to the opposition government, as our supporters in the Yet when I West-Indian matters."

not long in respect of the times so far suspended pression in the motive he prepared to take an heaven the hands of the executive. once in the hands of the executive. "Read the last article It is written with a ss of the Popular Discon to a Yorkshire friend he y to the moderate, gradual,

that we bear better to hear our friends abused, than our enemies well spoken of. But I am sure that the converse of this dictum of the great Bacon's holds true in my instance; for this eulogy on the expression of my dear friend's countenance has given me very great pleasure. I must break off. Farewell.—”

One other brief but touching instance shall be added  
• from these crowded days.

“MY DEAR STEPHEN: You appeared to me to look unhappy last night, as if something was giving you pain either in body or mind. It will be a pleasure to me to hear that this was not so; or if it was, and I can help to remove it, let me try.

“Ever affectionately yours,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

## CHAPTER XXXVIII.

THE inquiries of the Secret Committee disclosed a fearful extent and degree of disaffection. "You and I agree," he wrote to Mr. Macaulay, "in esteeming it to be the duty of every good subject to support government when he can. But then I own I feel that to draw on ourselves the ill-will, and worse than neutrality of opposition on all West-Indian questions, when we can not have government as our friends, is to act in a way, which though it might become our duty if the ship were in danger of going down, is not to be expected from us unless in such critical circumstances. I have again and again been silent when I should have spoken against the democrats, and even oppositionists, more especially against party, but for the consciousness that I had to look to the opposition rather than to government, as our supporters in the Registry Bill and West-Indian matters."

The unsettled aspect of the times so far suspended these ordinary motives, that he prepared to take an active part in strengthening the hands of the executive.

To a correspondent he says: "Read the last article in the last (London) Quarterly. It is written with a pen of fire." (On the Progress of the Popular Discontents. No. XXXII.) And to a Yorkshire friend he says: "I continue friendly to the moderate, gradual,

and almost insensibly operating Parliamentary reform, which was last brought forward by Mr. Pitt. I am firmly persuaded that at present a prodigious majority of the more intelligent people of this country are adverse to the measure. In my view, so far from being an objection to the discussion, this is rather a recommendation of it. But it is a serious and very strong objection to its present consideration, that the efforts of certain demagogues have had too much success in influencing the minds of the lowest of the people in several of our manufacturing districts; most falsely persuading them that the evils under which we at present labor are owing to the state of our Parliamentary representation, and that they would be cured by a Parliamentary Reform. I have given you this general idea of my sentiments to enable you to form an opinion as to the propriety of my attending the ensuing public meeting at York."

A sharp and sudden fit of illness seized him the very day following the presentation of their Report by the Secret Committee, so serious as to hurry Mrs. Wilberforce to London on the summons of the friends who watched anxiously the inroads it was making on his feeble constitution; but after about three weeks, the cough, which was its worst symptom, yielded to medical treatment, and on the 11th of March he "thanked God that he was much better, but giving this week to annealing." His first attendance in the House was on the Lottery question. In moving its suppression, "Lyttleton," he says, "argued too much like a man who is conscious that he is liable to be quizzed by his gay companions for talking of religion, morality, etc. Romilly, as commonly, was feeling, moral, and elevated. I had not arranged any order of thought, and I argued

it too much on the ground of its effects, though not omitting higher considerations, but not enough introducing God's providence and will, (in the way wherein alone proper there,) and subjecting myself therefore to the answer Castlereagh gave, as if it were a question of feeling, not of right and wrong. How shocking does it seem to me, on cool consideration, deliberately, for the sake of £500,000 per annum, to break God's laws and abjure His protection! Oh! may He forgive us."

The Catholic question also was at this time agitating the people of England, and still claimed his earnest attention. His abiding interest in it is thus recorded by the poet Southey, with whom he dined at Sir Robert Harry Inglis's. Mr. S. writes: "A memorable day it was to me, not only on that account but also because I there, for the first time, saw the late Bishop of Limerick, (Dr. Jebb.) How it happened I know not, but although no person can be more disinclined to disputation than myself, we got into one upon the question of Catholic emancipation; Mr. Wilberforce and Sir Thomas Acland taking the one side, and I the other. Inglis had not yet been in Parliament, and I did not know what his opinions were upon the subject. Jebb, I knew, agreed with me, for with him as coming from Ireland, the state of that country had been one of the first things on which we had touched when introduced to each other. They took little or no part. It was a subject on which I spoke with no diffidence, because nothing could appear to me more certain than the perilous consequences which would ensue if the friends of the Church could be so far deluded by its enemies as to assist them in throwing down the bulwarks of the Protestant Establishment. But if my temper had been likely to hurry me into any unbecoming warmth, Mr.

W.'s manner would effectually have repressed it. His views, when I thought him most mistaken, were so benign; he took the ground of expediency with so religious a feeling, and argued it with such manly yet such earnest sincerity, that if it had been possible to have persuaded me out of an opinion so deeply and firmly rooted, he would have done it. Our discussion, for so it may be called, was protracted till two in the morning." Mr. W. says: "We dined at seven, and time flew away so rapidly that we kept on chatting till two in the morning, and my watch having stopped I thought it was half-past eleven." The fact of Mr. W.'s difference of opinion from those of his friends, on this subject, and his advocacy of the admission of Roman Catholics to Parliament, has been already noticed; but though it was decided, and the subject one of the deepest importance, he did not allow it to lead to any alienation of feeling. Thus at this time he "dined at Lambeth, (Archbishop of Canterbury's,) public day. Sat next the Bishop of Ossory, who immediately began talking on Catholic question, (on which he had spoken yesterday,) with great frankness, indicating a generous, manly spirit and good understanding. Lords Rolle, Bathurst, and others there, and Sir J. Hippisley, who had that morning taken the two titulars (Romish Bishops) to Lambeth, where Archbishop very civil to them." "Whom think you," he writes to Hannah More, (whose views on this subject were opposed to his own,) "I received five days ago to breakfast? Drs. Everard and Murray, the one titular Archbishop of Dublin, the other coadjutor to the titular Archbishop of Cashell. The latter introduced to me by a letter from Alex. Knox speaking of him in the highest terms, and adding that the true Sosia (the real live Arch-

bishop of Cashell) had lately told him: 'I delight in Dr. Everard.' I felt myself bound in honesty to tell them, when by ourselves, and softening it as much as I could in the manner, that though from political motives I judged it right not to resist the claims of the Roman Catholics to sit in Parliament, this did not arise in any degree from my having a less unfavorable opinion of the Roman Catholic religion than most of their opponents in the Parliamentary application. \* \* \* I can truly say that it is my firm conviction that stopping at the point at which matters now are is doing more than any thing else to preserve the Roman Catholic religion in full and active vitality. We ought either to go back or to advance. I will frankly own to you that I am by no means clear that, if the elective franchise had not been thrown completely open to the Roman Catholics I should consent to their possession of that privilege. But of all points that at which we have now rested is, it must be confessed, the worst."

"Poor Sally More," says his diary, May 19th, "died about a week ago, after long and extreme suffering; yet never impatient, but perfectly submissive and resigned—what a triumph of grace! All the world wild about Dr. Chalmers; he seems truly pious, simple, and unassuming. Sunday, 25th. Off early with Canning, Huskisson, and Lord Binning, to the Scotch Church, London Wall, to hear Dr. Chalmers. Vast crowds—Bobus Smith, Lord Elgin, Harrowby, etc. So pleased with him that I went again; getting in at a window with Lady D. over iron palisades on a bench. Chalmers most awful on carnal and spiritual man. Home tired, and satisfied that I had better not have gone for edification." "I was surprised to see how greatly Canning was affected; at times he quite melted into



tears. I should have thought he had been too much hardened in debate to show such signs of feeling." "All London," he was soon after told in a very different circle from his own, "has heard of your climbing in at that window." With the healthful play of a vigorous mind, he entered readily into the joke. "I was surveying the breach with a cautious and inquiring eye, when Lady D., no shrimp you must observe, entered boldly before me, and proved that it was practicable."

While closely and conscientiously attached to the Established Church, frequenting her ministry, and never but once partaking of the communion out of her order, he yet went frequently to listen to the eminent divines of other denominations, and maintained with many of them, such as J. J. Gurney, Jay of Bath, and Chalmers of Scotland, the most intimate and friendly relations. Joined with them by one Spirit, to one living Head, he never allowed either diversity of taste or of opinion on minor points, to produce any interruption of that "unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace," which is the privilege here of those who through one common faith in one common Lord, look forward to an abundant entrance being ministered to each into those many mansions in the one house of the one Father, which the one Redeemer hath gone before to prepare for his people. Where the spirit of Christ dwells, there is liberty, not disunion.

Reviewing the past month on the first of June, 1817, he determined to "keep an account, and watch in all ways to redeem the time. Having so many breakfasters, sadly interrupts me; often they have staid till nearly one o'clock. Thus every thing falls into arrears. Let me strive to set the main spring right, and then to mend the works also. God help and direct me; and though I deserve no such honor, enable me yet to do some

good. I humbly hope that I have lost my deliberate vain glory ; but for Christ's honor, I should be sorry to sink as I am now doing, into disrepute from my own mismanagement or indolence, added to a real decline of powers. May God purify my motives, while He prompts, quickens, and strengthens me for action. I have felt this day more comfort in religion than for some time past." Though these were his reflections when in the searching of his own heart he tried himself by the high standard to which he aspired, urging one of his children to steady application—"You can not conceive," he says, "with what pleasure I look forward to the time when you will be able to engage in plans for the improvement and happiness of your fellow-creatures. I can not but feel it as an honor, though except to a son I should not mention it, that when people have any scheme in view that is to do good, they come to me as an ally in such a warfare against sin and misery." The very next day's diary supplies an instance of these customary applications. "Cunninghame came in, and young Mr. W., with a charitable case of a foreigner and his family. I so much respect young W., a marine lieutenant giving up his half-pay for his father's support, and maintaining himself as a clerk in a warehouse, and yet busying himself for these poor people, that I could not help becoming answerable for the £20 he wanted for them, if I could not get it from the Distressed Foreigners' Institution."

The aspect of the times was troublous indeed, leading about this period to the proposal by the ministry, to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act. Mr. Wilberforce reluctantly supported what he deemed an unavoidable severity. His freedom from all party spirit gave a weight to his decision, which was keenly felt by oppo-

sition. Sir Samuel Romilly directed all his powers of eloquence and reasoning to take off the effect of so unimpeachable a judgment; and another member in a different strain attacked him warmly on the third reading, with an unworthy sarcasm aimed at his religious work. "The honorable and religious member," as he addressed him amidst cries of order from all sides of the House, "could hardly vote for any measure more thoroughly opposed to vital Christianity." He was strongly tempted to retort on his opponent the obvious epithet suggested by his opening sarcasm; but with rare forbearance he repressed the impulse to render railing for railing.

"I shall take no notice," he began, "of what has been said concerning myself, though I claim no credit for my silence, for I am well convinced that there is not a man in the House who would not feel lowered by replying to such language as the honorable member has allowed himself to use." "How," he said turning round to the preceding speaker, "how can the honorable member talk thus of those religious principles on which the welfare of the community depends? I would fain believe that he desires as sincerely as I do myself to perpetuate to his country the blessings she enjoys. But if I could be base enough to seek the destruction of those institutions which we both profess to revere, I will tell him what instrument I would choose. I would take a man of great wealth, of patrician family, of personal popularity, ay, and of respectable talents, and I am satisfied that such an one, while he scattered abroad the firebrands of sedition under pretense that he went all lengths for the people, would in reality be the best agent in the malevolent purpose of destroying their liberties and happiness."

His diary simply states: "B. forced me up in self-defense, and the House sided with me, though I forgot what I meant to say." "But never in my parliamentary life," says a member present, "did I hear a speech which carried its audience more completely with it, or was listened to with such breathless attention." "I can not recall," says another, "the capital sentence with which he concluded; and the reporters, for I looked in the papers next morning, did no justice to its force. But I well remember the manner in which he worked up his supposition, and then brought it home to his opponent. You know B——'s manner when attacked, his head high, his body drawn up. His tall figure as he sat on the upper bench immediately behind, was the higher of the two, even when Wilberforce stood up to speak. But when, after speaking for a few minutes, Wilberforce turned round to address him amidst the cheers of the House, he seemed like a pigmy in the grasp of a giant. I never saw such a display of moral superiority in my life."

Nothing can make his uniform forbearance more instructive than the knowledge that he at all times possessed this ready power of self-defense. "If there is any one," said Mr. Canning, "who understands thoroughly the tactics of debate, and knows exactly what will carry the House along with him, it certainly is my honorable friend the member for Bramber."

It was at this juncture that he was cheered by news which he thus communicates to Mr. Macaulay.

"However pressed for time, I must tell you without delay, or renounce forever all claims to being capable of the relations of peace and amity, that a very friendly and handsome letter from Castlereagh informs me, that he has actually received the treaty with Spain (signed)

for abolishing the slave trade generally and finally in May, 1820, and immediately to the north of the line; also, which is scarcely less valuable, that a system of mutual search is agreed to be established for enforcing the abolition law. Well may we praise God. I do congratulate you, my dear friend, and no one has more right than you to be congratulated; for no one has done or suffered more, or so much, as yourself, in and for this great cause." To Mr. Stephen he says: "Let us praise God for it."

## CHAPTER XXXIX.

THE first few weeks of the recess were spent by Mr. Wilberforce in clearing off the unavoidable accumulations of the session. They were busy and fatiguing days, and exposed to continual interruptions from the calls of charity, against which his doors were never closed. "July 21st. The birth-day of my two eldest children. I regretted that I was so hurried; I had little time to give to them, or to prayer for them. A poor woman called immediately after breakfast, just when I had meant to spend a quiet hour in devotion; but I called to mind Christ's example, and looked up to Him, hoping that I should please Him more by giving up my own plan and pursuing His—writing for her."

And to a friend he writes: "You were so good as to say that you would examine whether B. was in such circumstances as to afford fair ground for believing that £100 would, as he declares, extricate him from difficulty and prove permanently useful to him. I own the earnestness of Mrs. B. makes me fear their affairs are in a bad state; but you commercial gentlemen of experience can tell whether a man's affairs have a hectic flush, or a pale wasting, or finally the facies hippocratica with every prospect of a speedy dissolution. Mrs. B.'s father was a trusty, honest, and, though a Roman Catholic, a religious man; and having been a faithful

servant of my uncle, I think it quite a duty to attend to the state of his progeny, three or four of whom have been continually applying to me."

He wrote at this time to the Emperor of Russia, urging him to take such steps in the approaching Congress of the allied sovereigns as should secure the execution of the abolition compact.

Of the reception of this letter, he received from its bearer, the Rev. Lewis Way, a beautiful and characteristic sketch in a Latin letter, which may be thus rendered. "It was not the conference of a private individual with an Emperor, but rather of a Christian with a much-loved brother. With most kindly manners, a smiling face, an open heart, speaking warmly, and breathing a spirit of love not only almost, but altogether heavenly—such, as God is my witness, were the characteristics of this memorable interview."

To these employments was soon added a kind and constant attendance on the death-bed of a near connection.

"How striking," he writes to Mr. Macaulay, "it is to see a tender-spirited young woman looking the last great enemy in the face, with as much calm resolution as was ever shown by any military hero in the field—with far more, indeed; for far more surely is required where all around tends to soften the mind, and give reason its full unruffled exercise, than when the drums, and trumpets, and artillery, and the bustle of war has excited all the passions. She has long been her mother's consolation and earthly support; but these services can be rendered by other friends, or even by confidential dependents. There are still higher services which so much-loved an object can alone render; weaning from this world and exercising faith, and patience, and child-

like confidence and love. The effects of these will endure forever; and the day will, I doubt not, arrive, when the mother shall see that her daughter was selected as the honored instrument, after being her best and most assiduous friend in this world, of obtaining for her these still more excellent blessings. O my dear friend! the day is coming when it will be delightful to follow out all these now mysterious lines of Providence from the dark cloud in which they are at first wrapped, into the full brightness of celestial glory. This thought was brought powerfully to my mind this morning, when observing that a passion-flower was about to open, we stopped for about five minutes, and beheld the complete development of the beauties and symmetry of the interior.

“May God bless you and yours, my dear friend. What a blessing is friendship! How true is the psalmist’s exclamation: ‘How good it is to dwell together in unity!’ It is, in short, a heaven upon earth. May we realize it here, from its being the reflection from the better and less imperfect state of it beyond the mountains. Kindest remembrances to all common friends, and believe me ever,

“Your affectionate and sincere friend,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

Say his sons: “This was now become the ordinary temper of his mind. The morning clouds had passed away, and he walked in the fullest sunshine of ‘peace and joy in believing.’ His earlier journals contain, as has been seen, records of hard struggles with ‘divers temptations;’ but the power of the enemy had been long since rebuked; and after the most close and jealous self-examination, he could humbly say: ‘I prefer



spiritual to carnal pleasures, and never suffer any thing sensual to get the advantage over me deliberately. Am I guarded enough on the sudden?' He was still ever praying to be more fully 'quickened, warmed, and purified;' and at times he complained 'from what cause soever it is, my heart is invincibly dull. I have again and again gone to prayer, read, meditated, yet all in vain. Oh! how little can we do any thing without the quickening grace of God! I will go again to prayer and meditation. Blessed be God, His promises do not vary with our stupid insensibility to them. Surely God has always blessed me in all things, both great and small, in a degree almost unequalled, and never suffered me materially to fail when there has been an occasion for exertion.'

"But though occasionally harassed by such 'dullness of heart,' his ordinary spirit was far different. The full spring of love, and joy, and thankfulness, was bursting forth into spontaneous expression in his conversation, his letters, and his journal. All the natural objects round him had become the symbols of the presence and love of his heavenly Father, and like the opening of the passion-flower, suggested to him some new motives for thankfulness and praise. 'I was walking with him in his veranda,' says a friend, 'the year before, watching for the opening of a night-blowing cereus. As we stood by in eager expectation, it suddenly burst wide open before us. "It reminds me," said he, as we admired its beauty, "of the dispensations of Divine Providence first breaking on the glorified eye, when they shall fully unfold to the view, and appear as beautiful as they are complete."' 'For myself,' says one of his letters, when to his own family he unveiled his heart: 'I can truly say, that scarcely any thing has at

times given me more pleasure than the consciousness of living as it were in an atmosphere of love ; and heaven itself has appeared delightful in that very character of being a place, in which not only every one would love his brethren, but in which every one would be assured that his brother loved *him*, and thus that all was mutual kindness and harmony, without one discordant jarring ; all sweetness without the slightest acescency.'

"There was no obtrusive display of such emotions. True Christian joy is for the most part a secret as well as a serene thing. The full depth of his feelings was even hidden from his own family. 'I am never affected to tears,' he says more than once, 'except when I am alone.' A stranger might have noticed little else than that he was more uniformly cheerful than most men of his time of life. Closer observation showed a vein of Christian feeling mingling with and purifying the natural flow of a most happy temper ; whilst those who lived most continually with him, could trace distinctly in his tempered sorrows, and sustained and almost child-like gladness of heart, the continual presence of that 'peace which the world can neither give nor take away.' The pages of his later journal are full of bursts of joy and thankfulness ; and with his children, and his chosen friends, his full heart welled out ever in the same blessed strains ; he seemed too happy not to express his happiness ; his 'song was ever of the loving-kindness of the Lord.' An occasional meeting at this time with some who had entered life with him, and were now drawing wearily to its close with spirits jaded and tempers worn in the service of pleasure or ambition, brought out strongly the proof of his better 'choice.' 'This session,' he says, 'I met again Lord —, whom I had known when we were both young, but of whom I had

lost sight for many years. He was just again returned to Parliament, and we were locked up together in a committee-room during a division. I saw that he felt awkward about speaking to me, and went therefore up to him. "You and I, my Lord, were pretty well acquainted formerly." "Ah! Mr. Wilberforce," he said cordially; and then added with a deep sigh, "you and I are a great many years older now." "Yes, we are, and for my part I can truly say that I do not regret it." "Don't you?" he said, with an eager and almost incredulous voice, and a look of wondering dejection, which I never can forget.' 'You must allow that Mr. Wilberforce is cheerful," said some of his friends to one who had just spent a week in the same house with him, and who was fixing on religion the old charge of dullness. 'Yes,' she said in a tone intended to convey reproach, 'and no wonder: I should be always cheerful too, if I could make myself as sure as he does that I was going to heaven.'

"Yet with all this constant cheerfulness, there was a marvellous sobriety in his religion. His secret records of humiliation are aimed at specific faults, and do not waste themselves in generalities. 'How sad,' he says on one of these occasions, 'that I am still molested by the love of human estimation; so that when a man whom I think of very mean intellect spoke disparagingly of me before others, I felt vexed. What weakness! and all the time abhorring myself for it too; what a strange thing is the heart of man!' Again: 'I love human estimation too well, though I trust I strive against it; and I have no temptation to seek dishonorable gain. Now how ready am I to condemn those who addict themselves to the latter! Yet am not I as criminal in loving the former, for it is the not loving God that is

the vice? O Lord! purify me, and make me meet to be partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.' Again he complains: 'What over-valuation of human estimation do I find within me! And then also what self-complacent risings of mind will force themselves upwards, though against my judgment, which at the very moment condemns them, and yet my heart then claims credit for this condemnation! Oh! the corruption and deceitfulness of the heart!'

"The same sober judgment watched over his hours of unusual religious joy. 'Let me put down,' he says this month, "that I have had of late a greater degree of religious feeling than usual. Is it an omen, as has once or twice shot across my imagination—a hint that my time for being called away draws nigh? Surely were it not for my dearest wife, I could not regret it, humbly hoping, deeply unworthy as I am, that there is a propitiation for our sins, and that the mercies of God through Christ would not fail me. But oh! let me check the emotions of indolence and of trying to have done with the turmoil of this vain world of perturbations, and give way to a more lively gratitude for the mercies of the Saviour, and a more active determination and consequent course of holy obedience and usefulness. Alas! alas! considering my opportunities, I have been a sadly unprofitable servant. Pardon me, O Lord! quicken, soften, warm, invigorate me, and enable me to rise from my torpor, and to imitate the example of holy Paul, doing this one thing, forgetting the things behind, and pressing forward towards the mark of our high calling of God in Christ Jesus. Alas! I fear I sadly neglect my duties to my children, and also to the poor, for though I serve the latter more abundantly than by individual visitation, when with the

motive of Christ's speech, (Matt. 25 : 40,) I attend to whole classes and masses of them, yet individual visitation has its good also. O Lord ! teach, guide, quicken me. Without Thee I can do nothing ; with Thee, all things. Lord, help, bless, and keep me. Amen.'"

It is well worth the inquiry by what system of self-treatment these happy fruits had been matured. They were not merely the results of a naturally cheerful temper leavened with religious feeling ; they had their origin in close and systematic discipline. He kept a most strict watch over his heart. He still recorded by a set of secret marks the results of frequent and close self-examination under a number of specific heads. He used every help he could devise for keeping always on his soul a sense of the nearness and the goodness of his God. "I used to have an expedient similar to the Jewish phylacteries, (Numb. 15 : 38, 39,) in order to keep up the sense of God's presence. Let me try it again. I must have Him for my portion and the strength of my heart, or I should be miserable here as well as hereafter." Another custom from which he "found great benefit was putting down motives for humiliation, motives for thankfulness, and so on, which" he "carried about with" him, "and could look at during any moment of leisure." Such a paper, copied in part from one of earlier date, appears in a pocket-book of this year.

#### HUMILIATION, MEANS OF, AND TOPICS FOR.

"Consider—all my motives and just causes for gratitude ; constant, fervent, self-denying gratitude ; and then with this contrast my actual state—all my means and motives also to improvement and greater advance

in the Christian character. That if all that really passes within were visible, all the workings of evil, positive and negative, (especially if compared with my principles and lessons to others,) all my selfishness of feeling, and coldness of affection, too often towards those even whom I love and ought to love most, all my want of self-denial, all my self-indulgence, what shame would cover me! Yet that comparatively I care not for its being known to God. And is this because of His and Christ's mercy? Oh! what baseness! My incurable, at least uncured, love of human approbation, and my self-complacency or pain when much granted or withheld, even when my judgment makes me abhor myself for it. (I trust I can say I do not allow this vicious feeling, but repress it with indignation and shame.) Oh! were all that passes within in this instance to be seen fully, what shame should I feel! Realize this. Look at various other Christians who have not enjoyed half my advantages or motives to growth in grace, yet how immeasurably they exceed me!" (Here many individuals are mentioned.)

"How little good have I done compared with what I might have done! What procrastination! Consider in detail how deficient in the duties of an M. P., father, master, friend, companion, brother. Resolutions broken. Intemperance often. How sinful this when taken in relation to motives to self-denial, from love to Christ—and to self-extinction, for me a vile, ungrateful sinner! Oh! shame, shame!

"Early advantages abused, and benefits often lost. What an (almost) hell of bad passions (despair absent) in my soul when a youth, from emulation, envy, hatred, jealousy, selfishness! (Yet alas! justice to myself requires my adding how ill-treated here.) Time, talents,

substance, etc., wasted, and shocking goings-on, (Christianity considered :) and after the revellings over, as egregious waste of faculties and means among the fellows; card-playing, etc. Consequent course of living almost without God in the world, till God's good providence checked and turned me, (O miracle of mercy!) in 1785, through the Dean's instrumentality.

"But alas! since I professed and tried to live to God, sometimes only preserved from gross sin and shame by preventing grace. And alas! even till now how little progress, how little of the Divine nature, how little spirituality either in heart or life, how little of a due adorning of the doctrine of God my Saviour! How much vanity and undue solicitude about human estimation! (Oh! if transparent here!) Procrastination, inefficiency, self-indulgence, living below principles and rules. Contrast all this with my almost unequalled mercies and blessings. And remember God and Christ foreknow all thy ingratitude. N.B. All thy sins, great and small, are open to God's eye as at first, entire, and fresh, and unfaded, except as blotted out by Christ's blood.

"I find it one of the best means of gaining self-abhorrence, after such reflection as above delineated, to consider and press home what I should think and feel about another favored in all respects as myself, who should be such in all particulars as I am in point of sins, negligences, weaknesses, neglect, and misuse of talents, etc.; and then contrast my sins with my mercies, my service with my motives, my obligations with my coldness, the gratitude due with the evil returned. Alas! alas! God be merciful to me a sinner."

A friend, whose death-bed he was now cheering, "reading and praying with her daily," was upheld to

the last by the consolations of the Gospel. When her eyes had been closed in peace, he took his family to spend their summer holidays at Stansted, which had been kindly lent to him by his friend Lewis Way.

On the way he halted a few days at the parsonage of Graffham, the residence of Mr. Sargent, the biographer of Rev. Henry Martyn, from whence he wrote to James Stephen: "My dear Stephen: I was never at a place where my time was so little at my command. Dear Mr. Sargent has much to show me in this beautiful country, and I am therefore forced out in despite of my remonstrances, and driven in a little open carriage, which to any one, who like me, can not bear much exercise and feels but languid, is the very acme of luxury. Then we have some of his good neighbors to dine with us, so that the evening is expended. But we go to Stansted tomorrow, and there I must set to work in earnest. I hope, my dear Stephen, we shall see you there. It has given me regret that I did not think of extracting from you the promise of a visit. How you would rejoice in ventilating on the hill from the bottom of which I am now writing; and when at Stansted you are but twelve miles to a horseman or good footman from this place. You would be delighted to see the Sargents, with seven children, most of them as fair as the light, around them. How I wish you were here! Indeed, remembering how much my dear sister loved Mrs. Sargent, I am powerfully impressed with the feeling of the pleasure she would have had in witnessing such a scene of virtuous domestic comfort and rural beauty. But she perhaps does witness our enjoyments and partake of them, though with that complacent pity with which we look down upon the joys of children."

He spent a month at Stansted, "making an excur-



sion for twenty-four hours to Huskisson's country house, where I was most kindly received." He delighted in receiving almost as much as giving such proofs of friendship as that furnished by this temporary loan of the house of Mr. Way; and with playful philosophy threw aside any of the little troubles it entailed. "Mr. Smith, the steward," are his Stansted Park reflections, "was all that could be desired—extremely obliging; in short, just representing his master. He, dear kind man, had endeavored in every way to render me comfortable, had left me wine, and even china, plate, etc.; and the key of all his libraries, even of the sanctum sanctorum. We of course tried to do as little harm as possible. Though at first I thought we must have gone away on account of the housekeeper's bad temper, which sadly effervesced."

Among other duties which at this time occupied much of his thoughts and deeply interested his feelings, was the condition of Hayti, to which his attention was drawn by letters from Christophe himself, soliciting his assistance in the introduction of civilization and Christianity among his subjects in St. Domingo. It was no trifling undertaking and involved a great responsibility. His correspondence with Christophe and his ministers was sufficiently laborious, and the general superintendence of the emigrants to Hayti was full of annoyance and disappointment.

Professors for the Royal College, physicians and divines; governesses for the royal daughters, tutors for the sons; down to ordinary teachers of common schools, were to be selected with judgment and caution; and even ploughmen with their families and ploughs were added. They were to be sent into a land where the whole tone of morals was at the lowest

point, and though he inquired cautiously, scrutinized closely, and selected from those who presented themselves only the best, yet, even of the company thus sifted, many could not stand the trial. The professors quarrelled with each other; some by open vice disgraced the cause, some perished by dissoluteness and disease, whilst the few who labored faithfully found their hands weakened in their single striving against the multitude of evil-doers, and often added by their desponding letters to the already oppressive burden of this correspondence. Still he went on with his labors cheerfully, and never fainted in them so long as the possibility of doing good presented itself. Christophe had remitted to him £6000 for the purpose, and a balance left in his hands was paid to his widow on her arrival in England.

Few persons could be found willing to incur the privations of separation from home and its associations, with the fearful influence of a tropical climate, and the uncertainty of the life and temper of an ignorant despot among a savage people. And of that small number fewer still had the peculiar character which rendered them suited to the position. In order to test this point he invited all candidates to his house that he might, by personal observation and intercourse, "take their dimensions." He was deeply interested in this matter, and lamented sincerely the derangement of his plans by the sudden death of Christophe, before any benefit could accrue from his labors. He endeavored to secure the protection of the great European powers for Hayti, at the Congress at Aix la Chapelle, corresponding with Lord Castlereagh on the subject, and endeavoring to interest the Emperor Alexander through the agency of Mr. Clarkson. The Congress, however, would do no-

thing for "abolitionists," and refused to acknowledge the independence of Hayti. Mr. Wilberforce in his correspondence with Christophe urged on him the necessity for the reduction of his army, fearing "lest his own troops should leave him, and longing to wean him from his hankering after the conquest of the Haytian Republic." The necessity for guarding against a French invasion was the pretext for the standing army and the attempt at conquest; and though this necessity as he supposed, led, as Mr. Wilberforce too truly foresaw, to his ultimate destruction, he said of him, that "he defended his measures in so masterly a manner that no crowned head in Europe could send forth a letter more creditable either to the understanding or the principles of its author."

The subject was one which elicited a very warm expression of his feelings. It was the springing into existence of a nation looking around for sympathy and assistance, and he realized the importance of the kind of aid which should be extended, on which its whole subsequent history must depend. "Were I five and twenty," Sir Joseph Banks wrote to him asking for Haytian information, "as I was when I embarked with Captain Cook, I am very sure I should not lose a day in embarking for Hayti. To see a set of human beings emerging from slavery, and making most rapid strides towards the perfection of civilization, must, I think, be the most delightful of all food for contemplation."

Born and educated as a slave, Christophe had raised himself to absolute power, which he was most solicitous to use for the good of his countrymen. To educate his people, to substitute the English tongue for that of France, and the Reformed faith for that of Rome, were his leading projects; and in them he sought for

Mr. Wilberforce's aid and counsel. "He has requested me," Mr. Wilberforce tells Mr. Stephen, "to get for him seven schoolmasters, a tutor for his son, and seven different professors for a Royal College he desires to found. Amongst these are a classical professor, a medical, a surgical, a mathematical, and a pharmaceutical chemist." "Oh! how I wish I was not too old, and you not too busy to go!" he writes to Mr. Macaulay. "It would be a noble undertaking to be sowing in such a soil the seeds of Christian and moral improvement, and to be laying also the foundation of all kinds of social and domestic institutions, habits, and manners." "It produces quite a youthful glow through my whole frame," he writes to Mr. Randolph in America, "to witness before I die in this and so many other instances, the streaks of religious and moral light illuminating the horizon, and though now but the dawning of the day, cheering us with the hopes of their meridian glories." It was with this end especially that he undertook this new charge. "Christophe is not himself, I fear," he says, "governed by religious principles," but he was ready to admit and ever to uphold religion. "I have succeeded," he tells Mr. Hey, "in finding a physician, but I still want a surgeon, and much more a divine. Oh! what would I give for a clergyman who should be just such as I could approve!"

He wrote at once to Mr. Simeon, to bespeak his assistance in this search.

"We have been," he tells one of his sons, "harder at work than ever, and still we are in the state in which the sea is after a great storm—a heavy swell—by no means at rest in the haven. For till we hear the ship has actually sailed, 'more last words' are continually occurring. And I find this Haytian connection will by

no means be an encouragement to indolence. But I trust it will be an occasion for doing much good, and I really look up to God with renewed thankfulness; I say renewed, for His having by His good providence drawn me to the Abolition business has always appeared to me to call for the most lively gratitude. Individuals who are not in Parliament seldom have an opportunity of doing good to considerable numbers. Even while I was writing the sentence I became conscious of the falsehood of the position; witness Mrs. Hannah More, and all those who labor with the pen. Witness Dr. Jenner, and Sir Humphrey Davy, and all the good clergymen, which last class, however, I meant to except from the remark. But what various and extensive occasions of benefiting their fellow-creatures are presented to members of Parliament in this highly-favored country! And what thanks do I owe to God, for having led me from any subordinate line of official business into lines of service of extremely extensive usefulness, and less bitterly contentious, till Mr. Marryatt entered the field, than the walks of politics! In this Haytian instance, we are sowing the seeds of civilization and knowledge in a new society, which (may it please God) you may live to see exhibiting the new spectacle of a community of black men, of which the mass will be as well instructed as any nation upon earth. I will inclose you some returns of the state of the schools which I have just now received. Pray take care of them, and return them in three or four days, after showing them to any confidential friends; but I think it is better to keep Hayti in the back ground, till it is able to stand on its legs in a firmer attitude.

“My dearest boy, remember my counsel. If you come into Parliament, let me earnestly entreat you not

to expend yourself in speechifying on questions of grand political or rather I mean party contention; but while you take part in the public and general discussions that are of real moment, for this is what I have commonly done, choose out for yourself some specific object, some line of usefulness. Make yourself thoroughly acquainted with your subject, and you will not only be listened to with attention, but you will, please God, do great good. This is the mode in which I have often advised young men to proceed, but they seldom would be wise enough to follow my counsel, and hence you hear of many of them making one or two good speeches, and then all is over. This is really a sad waste of the means of prodigious usefulness which Providence has put into their power."

With such views opening on him, it was not unnatural that he should say: "Never hardly did I feel so much interested as in finding proper people for Christophe, especially a tutor for his son." This was no easy task. When he first began the work he had received no remittances from Hayti. He cared little for this, as far as it regarded his own risk. . . "if I should be a few hundred pounds out of pocket, the money might not be ill spent. . . but" he scarcely knew what to promise others. Soon, however, he was intrusted with a considerable sum, which "proved Christophe to be in earnest;" and he was able to offer liberal terms to the professors. Still it was difficult to find any except men of broken fortunes, who would emigrate to Hayti. "It has often struck me," Mr. Stephen says to him, "that you and all who have thought on the subject without experience, have formed an inadequate conception of the sacrifice involved in a colonial residence. Rely on it that in general there are only two motives

strong enough to keep any man or woman, without necessity, six months in the West-Indies — religious zeal, and *auri sacra fames*." At Hayti, moreover, all depended on Christophe's life and power. His demoralized and debased subjects must be coerced into morals and civilization ; and his death, or a revolution, would risk the fortunes or the lives of these, his stranger guests.

In the midst of this Haytian excitement he was obliged to part with his eldest son, who was entered at one of the colleges at Cambridge. His diary says : " Nov. 4th. W. set off for college. Talked much to him to-day ; telling him the chief events of my early life. I could not sleep quietly for anxiety ; yet dear — means to give me pleasure. I fear he will be overborne from not forbearing to expose himself to temptation. I told him often the main matter was to put the guard in the right place." Just before this, he had written to him on his nineteenth birth-day : " I broke away from the last lingerers of a crowded breakfast party, to come to town to one of those appointments with ministers which our different societies have occasion to make. This morning it was the Church Missionary Society pleading the cause of the antipodes, or nearly so ; of the native population of New-Zealand ; a fine race of men, both in body and natural character, who have been treated often with the most savage and wanton cruelty by the South-Sea whalers, as the ships are termed. It is really gratifying to reflect that we are thus contributing to save multitudes of unoffending beings from the grossest outrages ; and still more, that we are taking measures for preserving from destruction several missionaries, and families which may be termed semi-missionaries, who would be likely to fall victims to the wars

and affrays which the outrages of the ships might produce; for a prejudice being conceived against the Europeans, the innocent may suffer for or along with the guilty. I did not conceive my story would be so long, for I was about to follow it by stating that I had been detained till it was time to return to Kensington Gore. But as I find it will be too late when I get there to dispatch a letter to go by this night's post, I am stopping at a friend's to scribble a few lines to you. I can not possibly suffer this day to pass over without sending you the assurances of my most affectionate recollection, and that my prayers will be offered up with augmented warmth this evening, (though the special claim of this day was not forgotten in the morning,) that the Father of mercies will enable us both to welcome this day with unalloyed delight and thankfulness. I really can scarcely believe you are nineteen. But when you come to my age, if it please God to prolong your life to such a period, which is much beyond what the actuaries of the annuity offices would assign you, you will be more sensible from experience than it is possible for a young man to be. How fast time seems to have galloped, when we look on any event of fifteen to twenty years previous occurrence. When I took up pen my mind was full of jokes about flutes and tailors, excited by your cheerful and gratifying letter, (it is quite refreshing to me to hear your cheerful lively chat, though from such a distance,) which I read as I walked through the Park; but even if I had leisure, whereas I am much too late, the idea of your birth-day has so sobered my spirits as to force me into a graver strain. I must, however, merely breathe the wish, which will become a prayer, to the effect of that I have already expressed. There is, nevertheless, one idea which I



will add, that of your being *now* in a situation and circumstances eminently favorable to the purpose of strengthening your moral character—to speak as a philosopher—or of growing in grace, to use the far preferable language of a Christian—prior to the trial on which you will enter on settling at College. When our Saviour himself had any remarkable service to perform—and good men have imitated His example—He used to spend some time in preceding retirement and devotional exercises; and, indeed, His not commencing His public ministry till He was thirty, was itself an exemplification of my principle. I am persuaded, as I believe I have before stated to you, that hereafter it will appear you were placed in your present circumstances with a view to the confirmation of your religious and moral principles and habits. O my dear ——! let it be your care to prevent this gracious intention of Providence from being disappointed; in which case, indeed, (it is an awful consideration, but so it is with all our opportunities of improvement,) the enjoyment of your advantages would only swell the opposite account. But you would find it, I am persuaded, very useful, my dearest ——, if you were to reflect on your situation in the light I have now stated—reflect habitually, I mean. This would tend to stimulate your efforts, as it may justly encourage your hopes. For only think how it would probably have animated your endeavors if, on your entering the place where you at present are, you had heard a voice from heaven declaring to you that you were placed there for the purpose of qualifying you for the enjoyment of an immense increase in the measure of your everlasting happiness. I believe it no less than if such an express assurance had been made; because it is no other than what is warranted by the ex-

press declaration, in Scripture, of the character and dealings of our God and Saviour. But I must break off most unwillingly. I am to take the chair at a Bible Association this afternoon, and shall not have time to dine and dress for it. \* \* \* I also would apologize for my writing, if it should not be enough to explain that I have been, and still am writing on my hat, bent to an inclined plane, *pro*-desk, and I have had implements too."

In common with all Englishmen he had imbibed a strong feeling of loyal reverence for the daughter of the Prince Regent, the Princess Charlotte, the heir of the throne; who, possessing in a high degree the virtues which were adapted to adorn the high position for which she had been born, died suddenly, within a few hours after having given birth to a still-born son. The virtues of the mother added poignancy to the disappointment of the hopes of the nation, and clothed the entire kingdom not only in the habiliments but in the feelings of mourning. "About ten days before, she had remarked: 'Certainly I am the happiest woman in the world; I have not a wish ungratified—surely this is too much to last.' The loss most deeply felt; their life had been truly exemplary—charitable, unostentatious kindness to all the poor around Claremont." "I must say," is the postscript of a letter sent on this day to Mr. Babington, "alas! for Claremont; yet surely this is an event which reasoning on Scripture principles we may easily comprehend, both in the probable meaning of personal mercy, and national, as well as domestic, punishment."

"I thought," his diary continues, "in the night of writing a letter to the Prince Regent, hoping to find his heart accessible, and put down some notes for it:

but this day scarcely spent so profitably as Sundays should be. Too little private prayer and communion with God aimed at. Oh! remember thy high calling and the precious promises, 2 Cor. 6 at the end, and 1 John 3 : 1, 2, of fellowship with the Father and Christ, and Psalms 63, 84, and 36. O sursum corda." "Sent off," he says soon after, "a suitable letter with my Practical View to Prince of Coburgh. May God prosper it ;" and the notice of a "kind answer, in which he promises to read it," is followed by the prayer, "May God bless to him the perusal of it."

It was at this time also that he wrote privately to H. R. H. the Duke of Cambridge, invoking his attention as the member of the royal family under whose especial notice it should fall, to the manner in which "a system of unqualified skepticism was maintained and diffused by one at least, if not by more of the ablest and most accredited professors" of the University of Gottingen, in the kingdom of Hanover. Still zealous in every good work, we find him at the close of the year 1817 engaged in efforts for the relief of the sailors, many of whom were reported to him as suffering from destitution, exposure, and want of food. His retrospect of the year is marked by the usual sense of unworthiness, this feeling quickened by the loss of several of his oldest friends, Lord Muncester, Lord St. John, and others. "Having so little time," he says in his journal, "I must not write—my eyes being indifferent, and this is always awkward when meditation brings tears into them, which burnt them as much almost as any thing. But what, alas! could I put down but what too often before? I have been extremely engrossed by business, made late last night, and so my private devotions have been contracted. Let me guard against procrastination, strive

to be punctual and diligent: to grow in grace, living closer to God. Let me strive, though my children are with me, to prepare for the meeting of Parliament. Above all, let us live in Christ to God, and all will be well. O God! I go to prayer. Pardon, bless, sanctify me, and make me meet for a better world. My health is clearly not so good as it was, but I hope, I regret it it only as indicating my being called away before my work is done. Alas! alas! how much more I might have done, if I had been duly diligent and self-denying! But let me work at the eleventh hour. Lord, work in me and by me. Amen." "Amidst all my weakness I can look to God through Christ with humble hope, and even with peace and joy in believing. Lord, what I know not, teach Thou me. Wherein I am lacking, supply me with all needful supplies of strength and grace. I cast myself on Thy precious promises, and claim Thy offered salvation."

## CHAPTER XL.

To follow him step by step through each successive year, would involve a continual repetition of efforts to employ his time and opportunities as a good servant, waiting for the coming of his Lord, and seizing on every opportunity for usefulness to others. Whether manifested in the courteous reception of strangers introduced to his civility, of which he says, "clear that we ought to endeavor by personal and individual civilities to Americans, to cultivate the good will, and mitigate the prejudices and jealousies of the people of that country," or by his deep interest in Mrs. Fry's efforts for the improvement of prisons as a place of moral reform, or by his attention to the cause of education, connected with the national Church, "being suspected, though falsely, of loose attachment to the Church, because I do not hate Dissenters," in all these various plans and purposes the one great object of his life was yet kept steadily in view, and it is at this period, that he first admits the idea of attempting the actual *emancipation* of the negroes in the West-India Colonies. Up to this time his efforts had been limited by the desire to arrest the further importation; but circumstances which were brought to his knowledge, exciting his feelings of sympathy for the suffering of the slaves themselves, led him to undertake measures for their gradual liberation from the thralldom

of servitude. He remarks in his diary: "I am still in no little embarrassment what course to pursue as to the West-Indian question. The denunciations not only against those who are guilty of the positive acts of oppression, but against those who connive at its continuance, are so strong that I am truly uneasy at my having suffered so much time to pass away without having done any thing for relaxing the yoke of the most degrading and bitter bondage that ever ground down the human species. Yet valid objections have always occurred against every specific plan. Oh! may I be directed right! I quite long to bring some measure forward. Lord, guide and strengthen, and warm me with true Christian love of Thee, and desire to benefit my fellow-creatures for His sake."

It was chiefly the interest he felt in this question that led him to continue to retain his position as member of Parliament, nothing daunted by the labors and trials to which it subjected him. "Thus Providence seems to fashion my ways, and if I should go entirely out of public life in two years, I hope to have previously sown the seeds and laid the foundation of the West-Indian reform. I shall then, if I live, be sixty as much as most men's seventy. But my times, O Lord! are in Thy hand. Oh! how truly may I say, that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days! What cause have I to be thankful for kind friends! Lord Gambier most affectionate. Stephen most disinterested, and kind, and generous. Babington and Inglis, Charles Grant and Macaulay too, and Col. Barry truly friendly, frank, and kind. Surely no man ever had such undeserved mercies. Praise the Lord, O my soul!"

"Trinity Sunday. Blessed be God, I felt to-day more sensibly than of late the power of divine things.

Was it the present reward of not yielding to the impulse which I felt, but upon good grounds, to be longer in bed? I remembered Christ's rising long before day, and got up. Babington sent me a kind letter, warning me of H.'s excessive and vindictive rage, and intention to charge me with duplicity (I am sure I can say in the presence of God, none was intended) about the Bill for permitting the removal of gangs of slaves from the Bahamas to Guiana. Lord, undertake for me; let me not bring discredit on Thy holy faith. Thou hast the hearts of all under Thy power. Oh! turn them favorably towards me. At least let me not discredit Thy cause. I will not think on this business until to-morrow: but to-day I may say, 'Lord, be Thou my surety for good.' How many are the passages in the Psalms which give comfort under the assaults of unreasonable and violent men! How strongly have I felt the double man within me to-day! I really despise and abhor myself for the rising of thoughts referring to human estimation; which nevertheless will rise even as to this very self-abhorrence, and so on ad infinitum. Oh! what poor creatures we are! This should make us long for a purer heart and a better world."

Upon the dissolution of Parliament in June, 1818, he made an excursion to the Lake country. His spirit expanded amidst rural sights and sounds, and his heart overflowed with thankfulness to the Giver of all his mercies. He longed to teach all around him his own song of gratitude, and could scarcely bear its absence. "Most kindly received," he says after visiting an early friend, "by T., and he lives most comfortably, to the full of that word—I might say splendidly; but it is grievous and very injurious to spend day after day enjoying every indulgence without the mention or appar-

ent thought of the Giver of all good, and the Object of all hopes. Oh! if a fellow-creature had given us every thing, how should we have talked of him! What exuberant overflowings of gratitude should we have witnessed! It is a delightful place, and a magnificent house. But I find it hurt my own mind: I felt less from the non-recognition of Christ the latter days than the first and second. Oh! that I might more and more walk by faith habitually!" "Alas! poor G., from spending all his time in hunting and farming, is grown empty and stupid."

"There are two places," he had said in earlier life, "to which if I ever marry, I will take my wife—to Barley Wood, and Westmoreland." But Westmoreland he had never before found time to visit since his marriage; and even now, the fresh arrival of some Hayti parcels made him "grieve in secret over his lake expedition." Mr. Southey had endeavored to engage for him a house at Keswick; and, though unsuccessful, enticed him onwards by letter. "I am very sorry that you are not in this delightful country during this delightful weather. We are enjoying a real honest, old-fashioned summer, such as summers were forty years ago, when I used to gather grapes from my grandmother's chamber window—warm weather for polemical writing; and yet little as such writing is to my taste, I have been employed in it for the last week. B., with his usual indiscretion, thought fit to attack me from the hustings. It was wholly unprovoked, as I had taken no part whatever in the election, and every thing which he said of me was untrue. So I am giving him such a castigation as he never had before, and which, it is to be hoped, may last him for his life." Ten days later he writes



again. "The heat of the summer is checked, and we are enjoying sun and showers, with just such a temperature as makes exercise pleasant, and allows one to enjoy a little fire at night. I am as true to the hearth as a cricket or a favorite spaniel, and reckon it a privation when the weather is too hot for enjoying this indulgence."

Some continuous extracts from his Diary during this excursion, will show the natural working of his mind in a time of relaxation. Leaving Elmdon on the 10th, he reached Seaforth House, near Liverpool, upon the 11th of August. "When we got upon the paved roads, our linch-pin twice came out, and our spring-straps broke. A kind providence favored us, that no accident. Praise the Lord, O my soul!"

While at the house of a friend on his way, he says: "Morning and evening prayers. How gratifying that we have some Christian merchants! Most kind treatment. Staid at home for writing. Mr. J. remarkably pleasant—overflowing, and sparkling all the while. In the evening got into an argument about Dr. Johnson's religion. Mr. J. showed me afterwards Dr. Johnson's affecting farewell to Windham.—'May you and I find some humble place in the better world, where we may be admitted as penitent sinners. Farewell. God bless you for Christ's sake, my dear Windham.'

"In the night," he tells a friend to whom his heart was open, "a certain subject is apt to get the better of me and keep me awake; not so much from direct distress as from its being so interesting that it occupies the mind, and the effort of thought which is required for turning to another subject, wakes me." His sons say: "These wakeful nights were a great drain upon his strength, but careful self-discipline had taught him

the true Christian alchemy which can extract from all outward things the elements of gratitude and praise. 'I am up late,' says his journal, 'from having a very sleepless night, though blessed be God a very comfortable one—no pain and even no anxiety; my mind meditating gratitude to God for all his mercies, and thinking over passages of the Psalms.' It was a striking sight on such a morning to contrast his 'hunted' and languid frame with the full burst of thankfulness and joy, which seemed to flow most freely when the weakness of the body showed that it sprung from a spiritual and heavenly source."

"Sept. 2d. R. and S. off to see Keswick." They went longing to see Southey, but charged not to call upon him, "lest seeing lads of your age, should too painfully remind him of the son whom he has lost."

"5th. I took a two hours' walk by Rydale and Grasmere, and a good deal tired." It was not a little affecting to see him retracing with delight all his haunts of earlier days—another man in many things; his body bent and weakened, but his mind furnished and matured; his soul purer and well established after many struggles; but having passed through all the bustling scenes of an unquiet life with the simplicity of early tastes and affections unimpaired, pointing out to his children every well-remembered beauty, and teaching by them golden precepts and a most eloquent example the secret of his own calm and happy temper. "Why should you not buy a house here," one of his children asked him, as they walked, "and then we would come here every year?" "I should enjoy it," was his answer, "as much as any one, my dear, but we must remember we are not sent into the world merely to admire prospects and enjoy scenery. We have nobler objects of

pursuit. We are commanded to imitate Him, who came not to be ministered unto, but to minister. It doubles my own enjoyment to see my dear children enjoy these scenes with me; and now and then when we need rest from severe labors, it may be permitted to us to luxuriate in such lovely spots, but it is to fit us for a return to duty; and we must bear in mind too that at present we are in a world which is in a measure under the wrath of God, and there is much mercy in every natural beauty that is left in it. We may be contented to wait for full enjoyment till we get above to that blessed place, where the desire of our gracious God to bless us shall meet with no obstruction, and his love shall have no check upon its full exercise."

Yet he tasted thankfully of present pleasures. "I do not often," he tells Mr. Stephen, "get out of the garden for any vagarious wanderings, but whenever I do extend my walks, as to-day, for instance, when I was seduced from pacing it upon the terrace with my reader at my side, and get among the rocks, and scale the mountains, I quite long to have you with me." "7th. Busy till one. Then on Winandermere. Dined in the boat, under the lee of the great island. Home late, a delightful evening. Yesterday evening charming. Walked out at night and saw the moon and a flood of light from Wordsworth's terrace. 20th. Fair at church-time, and I went to Grasmere, where — read a common-place sermon at cantering or rather galloping pace; he preached last Sunday a sad trifling sermon on repairing Chester Cathedral; and before that, one chiefly taken from Hall's on the Princess Charlotte, utterly unintelligible to the bulk of his hearers. He dined with us, and I was sorry to find he already knew Cooper's Practical Sermons. I hoped they would have approved

themselves to him—but alas! In the afternoon I walked to two or three cottages, and talked on religion to the people.” His fervent spirit could scarce be contained in the full sight of such a state of things. “Our population,” Mr. Southey told him, “is in a deplorable state both as to law and Gospel. The magistrates careless to the last degree; whilst the clergyman of —— has the comprehensive sin of omission to answer for. The next generation, I trust, will see fewer of these marrying and christening machines. The manners of the people have dreadfully worsened during his long sleep. Even within my remembrance there has been a great change.”

During his short stay amongst the Lakes he did what he could to check this evil. He strove to rouse the slumbering energies of all whom he could reach or influence, and in all his scenery excursions visited the poor himself. From “Muncaster Castle,” Cumberland, Oct. 1, 1818, he wrote

*To Samuel Smith, Esq., M. P., Wood Hall Park.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND: I should be strongly urged to take up my pen to write to you, were it only to satisfy the feelings which are daily produced in me as I revisit the various scenes of this delightful country, over which you and I rambled two-and-forty years ago. What reason, my dear friend, have we both to consider as addressed to ourselves the injunction of Holy Scripture, ‘Thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years!’ but there the parallel ceases, for the passage goes on, ‘through the wilderness,’ whereas both to you and to me, (as you I doubt not are as ready to admit as I am,) life has been any thing but a wilderness. In truth, it has not been a

country flowing with milk and honey only, but with every other benefit and enjoyment which the heart of man could wish for, and more than any would be presumptuous enough to request. You may conceive on reflection what interesting recollections are called forth in my breast, when I recall to mind the scenes we visited, the objects which then engaged our minds, the conversation which passed between us, (I am now within a very few miles of Wastdale Head, the valley in which we slept, or rather passed the night, in the same wooden crib after piercing through the Gorge of Borro-dale,) and then when I proceed to review the long line of subsequent events, what do I see, but the continual bounty of the great Ordainer of all things? What reason have I to adopt the language of the psalmist: 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life!' I can not but add, Oh! that my gratitude were more commensurate with the vast and unceasing kindness and long-suffering (for long-suffering also I must add) of my unwearied Benefactor! But how I am running on! I have abundantly proved the truth of the remark with which I opened, that I was stimulated to write to you by my feelings alone. Farewell, my dear friend, and believe me,

"Yours sincerely and affectionately,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

Another letter, dated the same day, is an instance of the various claims upon his thoughts which found him out at Muncaster as surely as in London.

"MY DEAR MACAULAY: K——, a young man who was rakish and in distress, is now stopping in Madeira, on his way to the East-Indies. He now professes to be

penitent; praises Doddridge's *Rise and Progress*, etc. I hope all may be well, but dare not be too sanguine. Will you mention him, and forward the inclosed, to some pious man (Edwards I think is the name) resident in Madeira, who, if K. be really religiously impressed, may help to kindle the smoking flax?

"I am ever affectionately yours,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

"Spent the following week at Keswick—visited Southey, who very pleasing, light as a bird in body, and till the loss of his son, I hear his flow of spirits astonishing. He is a man of extraordinary method and punctuality; hence booksellers love to have to do with him. His library excellent, filled with curious Spanish and Portuguese manuscript volumes. He allots one time (before breakfast) to poetry, another to history, and so on. His *History of Brazil* is that to which he looks for fame. He is kind, hospitable, generous, virtuous, and I hope, religious, but too hasty in his judgments, and too rash in politics. Hence he would be a dangerous counsellor though an able defender."

"R. and S. got to Rydale on Thursday night, and are staying with the Wordsworths. I heard just before I went, that the daughters of a shopkeeper who had lately returned to Keswick with an acquired fortune had set up a Sunday-school. I called on them and gave them £2 for it, and encouraged them. The vicar would not join, though they are churchwomen. I was much inclined to stay till Monday, in order to see after the School on Sunday, but could not send for the two boys to us. I tried to urge — to religious efforts for the town, but could not prevail on him; he pleaded want of time, no coöperators, etc. I long to settle

there and try to do some good, though I see the difficulties great. On the 22d a Bible meeting is to be held, Richmond having written to the Dissenting minister—not well judged. It caused me much pain and self-reproach afterwards that I had not fixed to stay over Sunday. May God forgive me. Oh! let us yield to the still small voice, and make doing religious good overbear at once all other considerations.”

“Southey with us—much delighted with him.” What Southey thought of him may be told in his own words. “I saw more of your father during his short residence in this country, than at any or all other times; and certainly I never saw any other man who seemed to enjoy such a perpetual serenity and sunshine of spirits. In conversing with him you felt assured that there was no guile in him; that if ever there was a good and happy man on earth, he was one; and that eminently blessed as he was with a benign and easy disposition, the crown of all his blessings was that inward and undisturbed peace which passeth all understanding.”

“I recollect one circumstance during his visit to the Lakes, which shows the perfect reliance his servants had upon his good nature—forbearance it might have been called in any other person, but in him it was no effort. The coachman came in to say that some provision concerning the horses had been neglected, and your father with a little start of surprise, replied, ‘that indeed he had not thought of it.’ ‘No!’ said the coachman, and ‘since you have been in this country, you have all of you been so lake, and valley, and river, and mountain mad, that you have thought of nothing that you ought to have thought of.’”

When his family party had broken up at Rydale, he had been compelled to travel in a different direction

from the rest; and on the 24th of October he wrote to Mrs. Wilberforce from Cambridge: "I thank God I am arrived at this place in safety, making up near 350 miles which I have travelled, full 100 of them at night, without a single accident. How grateful ought I to be for this protecting providence of a gracious God! And I just now recollect in a most natural connection, that to-morrow, the 25th of October, is the anniversary of the day on which I experienced that notable escape from being drowned in the Avon, when we lodged at Bath Easton. Praise the Lord, O my soul! I forget the year; do tell it me if you remember, by a mother's calendar."

"Sunday. Lest I should not be able to write in the evening, I take up my pen now, (three quarters past two,) though I shall to-day write but little, having had very little time to myself this morning before church. My heart would be very sad, but for the blessed prospects that are opened to the eye of faith—even the faith of an unworthy sinner. I hope it will be the effect of these earthly sufferings to wean me from this world, and fix my affections and desires more on that better state, where sorrow and sighing will have fled away. However, I will not open any chapter of grievances this day, and I am ready to burn what I have written, on account of its being in any other strain than that of thankfulness. Oh! what cause for gratitude have I; no man surely so great, at least very few! My spirits are not in themselves so cheerful as they used to be, but it is one of my many mercies that they are so good as they are. I suppose the mental sky of every one has its 'dim passing cloud that just tempers the ray.' Stephen comes here to-day. Dear fellow; his kindness, like that of the Dean, is as lively as if it were ever so



short an effort, and as persevering as if it were ever so parsimoniously exerted. No man could ever have more cause for thankfulness to the Giver of all good for the many kind friends He has vouchsafed me. Farewell. Commending you to the best blessings of God,

“ I am ever yours,

“ W. WILBERFORCE ”

On the 24th of December he was again at Kensington Gore, surrounded by his family : and the new year opens with some striking resolutions of devoted service, in his usual tone of deep humility. “ It is with a heavy heart that I look forward to the meeting ; so many friends absent, and so many objects of pursuit, and I so unequal to them ; yet had I duly used my powers, I could do much. O Lord ! do Thou quicken and guide me. I have resolved to dine out scarcely at all during this season.”

His daily occupations differed so little from those of the preceding spring, that the copious transcripts of his diary at that time will render needless any but a few of the most interesting extracts of the present season. Some of these throw a strong light upon his character. “ I thank you for your truly friendly conduct,” is his answer to a friend who had transmitted to him the censures of another on his conduct, “ and I beg you to join my dear and excellent brother-in-law in helping me to correct my own infirmities ; as you have so often kindly borne with them. For this end the first step will always be to tell me of my faults, and I trust I can truly say I shall love you the better for so doing, and even if I do not think you right, I shall be sure that your motive was friendly. You must also flap me and rouse and aid my decaying memory. Poor dear Babbington ! I miss him often in this way.”

These were not idle words. In presenting a petition from the "Society of Friends," against the severe enactments of our penal code, he expressed his deep regret for the loss of that great man who had made this subject his especial study. This warm and feeling language drew on him a remonstrance for having termed Sir Samuel Romilly "a great and good man." "Had a truly honest and Christian-like letter from Mr. Poynder," is the humble entry of his diary, "to which I replied, I trust, in the same strain, on my eulogium on Sir Samuel Romilly. Perhaps I went too far, though the newspaper made me say more than I did. But alas! I well know how often I am led away into saying what I never meant! How can I but add the above," he continues, "when I am fresh from the House of Commons, where most unaccountably, except from my not having at all meditated beforehand what I should say, I am told, and I fear justly, notwithstanding some opposite assurances, that I was extremely harsh against Castlereagh. How strange this! I really have a personal regard for him, have always wished, and do now wish him well, and did not in the least mean to be severe, especially against *him*. He had no interest in preventing the inquiry. However, may God forgive me, and enable me to act in a way more agreeable to my Christian character of peace, and love, and meekness. I am truly and deeply hurt by the consciousness, though quite relieved by a few friendly words which passed between Castlereagh and me in going out of the House."

He was much urged to undertake the management in the House of the motions for a revision of the penal laws, but though his diary at various times contains ample evidence of the deep feeling of horror with which

he regarded many of the features of the code, and of his anxiety for the spiritual instruction of those who were the victims of its severity ; he felt that it was better for the cause itself, that some one else should undertake its management, while he gave all the assistance in his power.

## CHAPTER XLI.

THE religious anniversaries in the month of May, always added greatly to his labors; and upon their recurrence in the year 1819, his diary bears strong evidence of the readiness with which, though overwhelmed with occupation, he entered into the spirit of the time.

“ May 2d. Sunday morning, Gerard Noel—evening, Mr. Matthias from Dublin, a most striking preacher. Lady O. and M., and an infant schoolmaster dined—the Barrys with us. Alas! I quite shrink from the week\* that is before me. Well, God has graciously supported me hitherto, and still let me trust in Him. I know not what to make of this hurrying residence; my continuance here claims my most serious consideration.”

It was from the prominent part always allotted him on these occasions that he so greatly shrunk. No man ever attended them with a simpler or more fervent spirit, or entered therefore with more feeling into all their true excellence. “There really is in such a scene,” he writes to a friend, “a moral sublimity, which, if duly estimated, would be worthy of the tongues of angels; and indeed, I doubt not, they who are declared by our blessed Lord to sympathize with the poorest,

\* Anniversaries of Religious Societies.

repenting, earthly sinner, do participate in the joy and thankfulness which are called forth in our Christian assemblies, in hearing of the general diffusion of the word of God, and of the labors, and sufferings, and, blessed be God, the triumphs also, of those zealous missionaries who are devoting their lives in distant lands to the service of their divine Master."

Never was his eloquence more winning than when on these subjects it flowed fresh from his full heart—and many a stranger to the ordinary excitements of the town returned at the week's end into the country nerved by it afresh for his path of solitary labor. "I shall never forget," says one who thus heard him, "the effect of a short speech of his upon my own mind. He was alluding to some natural difficulties which had impeded the success of missions, which ought not to discourage us; for nature seemed often, as well as man, to fight against St. Paul. He was not merely 'scourged with rods,' but 'thrice he suffered shipwreck.' The tone, the manner, the voice in which he brought out this simple thought, was so overpowering that I went home with it ringing in my ears for days."

The bustling week to which he was looking forward began upon the 3d of May, with "Breakfasted Dr. Hamilton (Irish) Owen, Mons. Kieffer from Paris, Mons. De Solles, (stating the friendly disposition of the present French government to our Bible Society,) and to Methodist Mission Society, where a full meeting—afterwards Church Missionary House—eat cold meat—and House—Catholic Question.

"4th. Church Missionary anniversary. Dear Lord Gambier in the chair, and closed with a hymn after opening with a prayer. I spoke warmly, and so pretty well. Mr. Matthias from Dublin very good. Delight-

ful meeting. Lodgings and writing, when I recollected Lottery Resolutions. Hurried down to the House, and found Van, concluding his defense of Lotteries against Lyttleton, who I heard had spoken long and ably. I drawing up Canning, the debate became lively and warm. Poor Canning—how grievous it is to hear him so unjust to his own real kindness of heart, as to attempt to turn into ridicule the story of distress told by Buxton with great effect!

"5th. Several breakfasters. Bible Society anniversary. Charles Shore spoke with fascinating tenderness. I was called on suddenly, but D. G. did pretty well. Then cold meat—and Downing Street. Then House.

"11th. Naval and Military Bible meeting. House. Lord Camden's generous gift to the public, and Tierney acknowledged it very handsomely. It is a sad proof of the low moral tone of the world, that people in general say: 'More fool he.' Then bill for protecting the New-Zealanders and Otaheitans."

"15th. British and Foreign School Society. Duke of Kent in the chair. Oh! how glad I am that the tenth meeting is this day over! The consumption of time is really too great." "Would it had been my favored lot," writes Hannah More, "to hear one of twelve speeches in ten days." The wonder is how with his feeble health he stood such constant fatigue. A house crowded with "inmates". . . their number swelled every morning by a tide of "breakfasters". . . then a throng of "callers"—a crowded meeting at which he made often a long, always an animated speech—then a budget of letters to be read and answered—his only rest or food a "canistered"\* dinner; and then the

\* This was a cold dinner taken hastily sometimes in his carriage, so called from the vessel in which it was contained.

House, where he sat long, and sometimes spoke again, not getting home till "all were gone to bed." It is not a little striking, to turn to some of his letters to his children, written in the midst of such a life as this ; often at hurried intervals when waiting for an audience at an office, or some such scrap of time ; (" for I always take the raw material with me to such places, and work it up into the manufactured article as opportunity permits ;") but showing even in their fair and legible characters how much he consulted the feelings of those to whom he wrote. A sample or two of this correspondence, maintained once a week at least with each of his absent children, will best show his tone of mind.

" MY DEAR — :\* I stop at a friend's house in London solely to write to you a few lines ; sincerely concerned at my having been so engrossed by a host of callers, as not to secure a single quarter of an hour secure from interruption to converse by pen and ink with my very dear absent child. Yet as when you were a little boy I used to delight in taking a passing kiss of you, so now it is quite gratifying to exchange a salutation with you on paper, though but for a minute or two. The sight of my hand-writing will call forth in my dear affectionate — all those images of parental and family tenderness, with which the Almighty permits us to be refreshed, when children and parents are far separated from each other. You have a heavenly Father, too, my dearest boy, who loves you dearly, and who has promised He will never leave you nor forsake you, if you will but devote yourself to His service in His appointed way. Oh ! my dearest boy, pray in earnest ; guard against formality in prayer. Endeavor

\* Aged 13.

to place yourself as it were in the presence of God when you call upon Him. Again and again, may God bless and preserve you, and grant you His Holy Spirit, and a disposition to deny yourself. But I must break off; some body has been talking to me almost all the time I have been writing, so if there are mistakes, excuse them; and believe me ever,

“Yours most affectionately,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

*To the same.*

“MY DEAREST — : The last letter from home communicated to you the death of one young friend; my present letter will convey the account of an event still less to be expected; that of the death of poor B. Poor young man, he sadly disappointed all his real friends, not only by failing in his studies, but also I fear by a licentious course of conduct. Suddenly he was thrown on a bed of sickness. Mercifully God gave him some days for repentance, and we are not without hope he may have found mercy, for he was very penitent. But alas! dependence on a death-bed repentance is a sad dependence indeed! O my dear boy! may you remember your Creator in the days of your youth; then whether you live or die, all will be well. Farewell, my very dear —, I am sadly hurried, but I would not omit writing to you to-day.

“I am ever your affectionate father,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

*To the same.*

“MY DEAREST — : I have not either time or eyesight to-day sufficient to send you what from its size,



may deserve the name of a letter ; but a lettering it may be called, and you know the old passage, *Inest sua gratia parvis*—a maxim which from my not being myself of extravagantly large dimensions, I may be supposed to consider a very reasonable proposition. I am glad to find (and it is quite a drop of balm in my heart when I hear of my dear boy's going on well,) that you are setting to work doggedly, as Dr. Johnson used to term it ; but I like neither the word nor the idea. I hope my dear boy will act from a higher principle than one which I have seen in a poor animal in a team, when the *taste* of the waggoner's whip has made him resolutely set all his muscular force in action, and pull up a steep as if determined to master it. But my dearest — will be prompted by a nobler set of motives ; by a desire of pleasing God and showing his gratitude to his Saviour, and not grieving the Holy Spirit ; of giving pleasure to a father and mother who are watching over his progress with tender solicitude. I have been looking over some old papers till my heart is not a little affected. How year passes away after year, and first one person is snatched away and then another ! Little did I expect I should outlive so many much more robust, and many of them younger than myself. But to persons of your age as well as mine, the lesson is read : ' Be thou also ready.' And then, my dearest boy, we shall never part, if we have made our calling and election sure ; we shall never again be in the storm, but remain forever in the enjoyment of the pleasures which are at God's right hand for evermore. I remembered that you would receive this on a Sunday, and therefore permitted myself to fall into a serious strain. Indeed, I am always tempted to sing in this key when I am addressing one of my absent children, because loving them so dearly, I

am naturally drawn into the discussion of those topics in which their best interests are concerned. Above all things, my dear —, attend to your private devotions. Beware of wandering thoughts. If you do but pray in earnest, I am *sure* all will be well. May God bless and preserve you. Poor — has suffered grievously from the bite of a gnat; her arm from the shoulder to the finger has been greatly inflamed, but D. G. she is now getting better. I remember Dr. Clarke says, the Russian soldiers often die from the bites of the gnats in the country bordering on the Crimea; and yet it used to be said, that ‘You flay a Muscovite to make him feel.’ God bless you, my dearest —.

“Ever your affectionate father,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

The wanderings of the summer of 1819 are pleasantly retraced in a letter to a friend: “My summer, which began late, has been spent almost entirely with various friends—the Noels, at my old haunt of Barham Court, near to which you once endured the labors, if not the dangers of war (on Cox Heath)—my valuable old friend Mrs. Hannah More, whom we rather visited, because we deemed it but too probable that if we should not see her this summer, we might never see her alive in another; and such is the uncertainty of life, that we witnessed the death-bed, and nearly the actual departure, of her younger and stronger sister—then we spent a few days at the romantic and beautiful seat, Blaize Castle, of my friend Mr. Harford; and afterwards a fortnight with the Bishop of Gloucester, whom I heartily wish you could hear and see both in his public ministrations and in his private life; he is really what a bishop

should be—for humility, industry, zeal with sobriety, hospitality, and above all, for love in all its kinds and directions, he is really a bright specimen; and the veneration and affection that are felt for him by all who know him, even by those who do not entirely concur with him in religious principles, are seen beaming from every countenance, and sparkling in every eye. He practically remembers the motto of old Archbishop Usher's seal ring—*Væ mihi si non evangelizavero*. On the week-days he visits different country parishes, whence the income of his deanery is derived, and collects round him as crowded congregations as are usually found in a well-frequented church. Then we were seduced into spending near a fortnight at Malvern, having visited it with the intention of merely a twenty-four hours' cursory survey. For the recovery of an invalid, or for the means of enabling an old man to toddle up the mountains (not quite Himalayans) without fatigue or even effort, it is by far the first of all English elysiums. Then we spent a little time with Mrs. W.'s widowed mother, whence I paid a second short visit to a sweet lady friend to meet, by his and her urgent desire, the Duke of Gloucester for a few days en ami, (must I not be an inch or two taller for the distinction ?")

All his letters were, at this period, tinged by one subject. Much popular disturbance had occurred in the manufacturing districts. "Let me beg you," he asks a friend at Sheffield, "when you write to give me all the information you can concerning the state of mind of your lower orders, and particularly whether the religious part of your community has in these trying times been acting worthy of its high calling. I declare my greatest cause of difference with the democrats, is their lay-

ing, and causing the people to lay, so great a stress on the concerns of this world, as to occupy their whole minds and hearts, and to leave a few scanty and lukewarm thoughts for the heavenly treasure. \* \* It really provokes me to a degree of indignation greater, I fear, than Christianity warrants, to look forward to what may happen to this highly favored country from our internal divisions. Party, party, is our bane. I feel, I think, much as Lord Falkland did when he used to stalk about his tent and exclaim, Peace! Peace!"

The worst feature of the disaffected, was their zeal against the Christian faith. "What your Lordship and I saw," he reminds Lord Milton, "amongst the papers of the Secret Committee, gave me but too much reason to fear that the enemies of our political constitution were also enemies to our religion." "Heretofore they inveighed against the inequality of property, and used every artifice to alienate the people from the constitution of their country. But now they are sapping the foundations of the social edifice more effectually by attacking Christianity. The high and noble may be restrained by honor; but religion only is the law of the multitude."

He took his seat in the House on the first day of the session; and when he "spoke with effect though without premeditation," he maintained forcibly the cause of order. He arraigned the irreligious spirit of the authors of the agitation, proved that the bar of the House of Commons was the most improper place for an inquiry into the behavior of the magistrates, and turning upon those who showed some inclination to reap a factious triumph from the sufferings of their country—"Can there be one man here," he asked, "who does not from his heart lament these transactions? If there be, it

must be one who has learned to look to civil war and slaughter for the regeneration of the country, and to regard the overthrow of our religion and our laws as the means of accomplishing their end."

Throughout the stormy session which succeeded, his language was the same. He esteemed "the situation of the country very critical, and though" he "had no small reason to complain of some members of administration," he "thought it" his "duty to come forward in support of the several measures which were proposed for the preservation of the public peace."

"We are in a state of almost combustion," he complains amidst nightly contentions, "which does not suit me as well as it did thirty years ago—

'Calidus juvenis  
Consule Planco.'

In the hot fit  
Of youth and Pitt.

Yet his own mind was quiet in the storm. The next day's diary affords a glimpse of those deep waters which no political tempests could disturb. "Walked from Hyde Park Corner, repeating the 119th Psalm, in great comfort." His learning this whole psalm by heart in all his London bustle, is a striking instance of the care with which he studied the Holy Scripture; and in spite of his complaints, his memory could not have been materially injured, since he could (even with the help of a technical artifice which he now frequently employed) acquire and retain perfectly this long and unconnected passage.

The year 1820 opened with an unexpected calm. The restrictive Acts of the preceding session, and the

clearing of the commercial gloom, quieted the angry spirit of that stormy period. A busy session seemed to be at hand ; when the unexpected death of George III. suspended public business, and dissolved the Parliament. Mr. Wilberforce's spring passed in its usual employments, marked only by two domestic features ; the marriage of his eldest son, and the lingering and fatal illness of his early friend Dean Milner, of Carlisle. He came to Kensington Gore, to attend as usual on the Board of Longitude ; and after five weeks of suffering illness, breathed his last upon the first of April.

Many were the hours he gave to soothing the sick-bed of his friend. Though his life had been spent so much in public, he was no stranger to such scenes ; and never was the genuine tenderness which filled his heart more beautifully shown than in these unwitnessed charities. More than one touching instance may be quoted from the private memoranda of a friend, who was at this time a frequent inmate in his family. At the close of one of his days of hurry, perhaps after the stormy contests of the House of Commons, " between twelve and one o'clock he heard that his daughter, who was ill, could get no sleep. Coming into her room, he took her hand, and, kneeling down by the bed, spoke of the tender shepherd carrying the weak and lame in his bosom to warm and cherish them. Then he applied this to our blessed Saviour ; spoke of His tenderness and love : how He would feel for His dear suffering child, and conduct her all the way she had to go, until He took her from this scene of trial and sorrow to a world where sorrow and sighing shall flee away—' a beautiful personification, indicating their haste to leave the mansions of the blessed.' In this spirit he prayed

with her, and never left the bed until her spirit was visibly soothed and supported."

On the 24th of May, he "went down to Paul's Cray, honest Simons's, where a great party at his school fête. Gerard Noel gave us a beautiful sermon. Lord and Lady Jocelyn, Charles Noel, Lady E. Whitbread, and various friends." He was all sunshine at such times, from principle as well as habit. "It is a fault to be silent; every one is bound to present his contribution to the common stock of conversation and enjoyment;" and wherever the group was the most crowded and attentive, he was sure to be found its centre. From all this he stole away, and "asked me" (to quote from the same memoranda) "to walk with him down the village. It was to visit a poor woman, of whom he had heard as in a deep decline. He found out the sick-room, and sat down by the bed, and began to speak to her of the love of God, which should dwell in His children's hearts. 'Ask yourself, then, do *you* love Him? We know how love to our fellow-creatures' acts; how it makes us try to please them, bear for their sakes unpleasant or unkind things, pain or hard words, with patience. Now does your love to God act in this way? Do you bear patiently what He sends you *because* He sends it? It is no proof of love to God to do what pleases us, to come, for instance, as I have done to-day, to see all those dear children in the society of friends I love. But if you submit to your illness, and give up your will to God's will; if you seek to listen to His voice in this affliction, if you are patient under your sufferings, and gentle to those about you, this will indeed be a proof of love to God. And then think of the happy consequence. He will come and abide with you, and

bring such peace and joy into your heart, as none else can bestow. The Comforter will come and dwell with you ; not pay you a short visit as I am now paying to my friends here, but dwell with you, and never leave you. Now this is the joy I wish for you.' And then he knelt down, and asked of God to comfort and support her, and after all her sufferings, bring her to a world of peace and joy, where the former things shall have passed away. 'It is delightful to me,' he said as we returned, 'to visit such a bed of sickness, to be able to take one ray of joy from the full sunshine of the social circle, to gild her sick-room. It has been one of the happiest days I ever spent.' "

During all the fearful contentions which agitated the kingdom on the occasion of the difficulties between King George IV. and Queen Caroline, he was compelled to act a prominent part, and was exposed to much misapprehension among his friends and calumny on the part of his enemies ; the only result of which was to drive him the more earnestly to God for counsel and strength, and to make him the more watchful over the motives by which his conduct was impelled. To a friend he wrote :

"There are those even whom I love, who, if they will not look at me with altered countenance, will yet feel real grief of heart ; and I perhaps, even to weakness, feel full as much pain from the consciousness of grieving them. But we must not suffer such considerations to affect our conduct, or even to bias our judgment. Yet it is one of the views in which a better world often presents itself to my mind's eye, and cheers my heart by the prospect, that then there will be no errors, no room for misconstruction, but all will at once recognize the kind intentions of others, and live in the



clear and full light of unclouded love and confidence. Oh! how trivial will then appear to have been many of those questions which we now contest so warmly!" His sons tell us: "His domestic character was truly remarkable. It was not merely that the tenderness of his earliest affections was unchilled by a bustling public life, but that there was a careful thoughtfulness as to the effect of little things upon his children's characters which seemed almost incompatible with his incessant occupations. This was now more observable when his sons were growing into manhood. For them he chose, as he had done for himself, (a far severer trial of his principles,) with no eye to personal ambition. His great wish was to see them useful clergymen, and leaving to themselves entirely the choice of their profession, he watched the little openings of domestic life to give to their minds the bias he desired.

"The result was what he wished. Of his four sons, who came of a stock which for twenty-six recorded generations appears not to have produced one clergyman, he lived to see two in Holy Orders, and a third preparing for the ministry. His letters to them are full of the same spirit."

*To a Son at Oriel College, Oxford.*

"SATURDAY, *March* 10.

"MY DEAR —: \* \* \* But you have perhaps been expecting to hear from me in answer to your question. I can not object to your plan of retiring to read, but I hope you will be very careful whom you select for your companions. Believe me on the credit of my long experience, that though Christians who wish to maintain the spiritual life in vigor and

efficiency, (fervent, ζεοντες, in spirit, serving the Lord,) may without injury mix and associate with worldly people for the transaction of business; yet they can not for recreation, still less for intimate friendship and society. With the deep interest I feel for your eternal concerns, (oh! how contemptible does all else appear in comparison!) I can not but enforce on you this most important truth."

"I hope you keep steadily to your plan of spending your Sunday properly, and not joining in parties on that day. Observation, and my own experience, have convinced me that there is a special blessing on the right employment of these intervals. One of their prime objects, in my judgment, is to strengthen our impression of invisible things, and to acquire a habit of living under their influence. Now, this habit will manifestly be contracted, not merely by gross outrages on the decorum of the day, but by whatever tends to secularize it, (if I may use the term,) to associate us with worldly objects and interests. '*Sursum Corda*,' is the Christian's Sunday motto. In the higher region to which he on that day endeavors to find access, he meets in idea that Saviour who died for him, and who still looks, we are assured, with the most tender solicitude and sympathy on all His followers, and with more kindness on none than on his younger servants. I think I must ere now have told you that before I married, and, indeed, when I used to spend my Sundays alone, before I had the privilege of having had such Christian friends as the late Mr. Eliot and dear Henry Thornton, I used after dinner to call up in idea around me my absent relatives and friends, and thus hold converse with the objects of my affection. O my dearest — I remember how much depends on you. You will, I trust, do

credit to your name. But, honestly, more depends on the next few years, than on any other period of your life." Thus, in the discharge of his duty to his children—to each of whom he made it a rule to write at least one letter weekly—and in the constant attendance to public affairs which his position required, his life wore away. He says, in his diary: "Day passes away after day, so rapidly, that life is sliding from me, yet little seems to be done. There is, I hope, no intentional misapplication of time; and we are 'to rule with diligence,' but I must retire from business for which not specially fitted."

His state of health at this time gave many indications that his parliamentary services must terminate ere long. Several successive attacks of illness made it impossible or dangerous for him to attend the House, and delayed his intended inquiry into the West-India system to another year. "I scarcely dare tell you," he writes to Mrs. Wilberforce, "that at one time, thinking I was not likely to be able to speak before Easter, I was actually meditating the cutting and running system without delay; when I recovered, so as to allow me the hope of doing two or three important matters before my departure."

His secret thoughts on his recovery are full of gratitude to God. "What cause have I for thankfulness, that even when ill I scarcely ever experience pain, or distress of body or mind! But then I learn, or rather I re-learn, from this attack, two important practical truths: when I become ever so little incapable of quiet continued reflection I can only gaze at known truths, and look up with aspirations of humble thankfulness to the will of my unwearied and long-suffering Benefactor. I should be ungrateful indeed, if I were

insensible to the innumerable mercies which I have been receiving all my life long. But it is astonishing how little I feel the lapse of time. I forgot that I am now arrived at sixty-one and a half years, though never a strong man, and in 1788 in such a state of apparent weakness, that Dr. Warren, of unrivalled sagacity, said confidentially, (but it was soon told to my kind, sympathizing friend Muncaster,) that I had not stamina to last a fortnight. How wonderful is it that I continue unto this day! But I shall probably have little warning; let me remember, therefore, Christ's admonition: 'Be ye also ready.'"

It was about the year 1821 that he determined to withdraw more from the active participation in the bustle of public life than it was in his power to do while occupying his house at Kensington Gore, which was especially convenient for the many interruptions to which his position in the religious, political, and philanthropical circles of society made him subject, and in conformity with the wishes of his wife and daughter, he sold his house, (inwardly grieved at leaving it,) and determined to settle in the country. "I hope," he says, "I shall secure more time for my family and myself when further from London; it will give my children country tastes and occupations, and they are virtuous pleasures. Treated with such kindness as I am, it would be strange if I were not to be happy anywhere. Oh! these things are trifles, mere, mere trifles, and so let us feel them. Here, indeed, my temper and principles coincide." He first settled at Marden Park, in Surrey. "It was once a fine place, and is one of the prettiest spots that I ever saw—without water. The form of the ground most beautifully varied, and the wood still fine, though a sad diminution of it was made to supply the

demands of a former lady, who was very fond of cards.  
\* \* \* It is comfortable to me to have a house of my own and my books about me, instead of being at a watering-place, as has been my summer habit for many years." Never surely was family religion seen in more attractive colors than in his house. "I only wish," said a college friend who had been visiting two of his sons, "that those who abuse your father's principles could come down here and see how he lives." His sons say: "It was a goodly sight. The cheerful play of a most happy temper, which more than sixty years had only mellowed, gladdened all his domestic intercourse. The family meetings were enlivened by his conversation—gay, easy, and natural, yet abounding in manifold instruction, drawn from books, from life, and from reflection. Though his step was less elastic than of old, he took his part in out-of-door occupations; climbing the neighboring downs with the walking parties, pacing in the shade of the tall trees, or gilding with the old man's smiles the innocent cheerfulness of younger pastimes."

Among the entries in his diary, are such as follow: "The sun very hot to-day, and the wind south. But under the beech trees on the side of the hill it was quite cool. Dined by ourselves, and walked with the boys in the evening." "Gave ale and cricket to the servants, and all the family, in honor of the Coronation. Thought it safer to refuse the invitation of a neighbor, lest my plan of quiet should be made more difficult." "How little does that child know how much it is beloved! It is the same with us and our Heavenly Father. We little believe how we are loved by Him. I delight in little children; I could spend hours in watching them. How much there is in them that the Saviour

loved, when He took a little child and set him in the midst: their simplicity, their confidence in you, the fund of happiness with which their beneficent Creator has endued them; then, when intelligence is less developed, and so affords less enjoyment, the natural spirits are an inexhaustible fund of infantine pleasure."

In the leisure of the country he meditated literary works of an extensive kind, and hoped to realize the wish of Mr. Babington, "that the evening of your days should shed a mild lustre on your contemporaries and on posterity, harmonizing with the great and important labors of your earlier years." "My whole life of late has been consumed by letters, and by other business which leaves no trace behind. I must endeavor to redeem the time for some useful work. Though the complaint in my eyes has for some years prevented my acquiring knowledge, or even keeping up what I had acquired, yet I hope that I might be able to compose both a religious and a political work, which would not be without value. May God bless to me this scene of quiet."

The execution of these plans was continually hindered by his public occupations. The West-India cause exacted all his time. He was at once obliged to begin writing "letters to two members of the American Congress and to the Emperor of Russia," while other kindred occupations followed.

One heavy trial alone clouded all this summer. His eldest daughter still continued in a state which gave him much uneasiness.

As the year advanced her small remaining strength was manifestly sinking, and on the 30th of December she breathed her last at Mr. Stephen's house, whither

she had been removed some weeks before, for better medical attendance.

"I have been employed," he tells Mr. Wrangham, "for a long period in attending the sick, and at length the dying-bed of a justly beloved grown-up daughter. But the pain of our late trial has been abundantly mitigated by the assured persuasion that she is gone to a better world. It would have been delightful even to those who were not so personally interested in the scene as ourselves, to have witnessed the composure with which, in the prospect of speedy dissolution, our dear child, naturally of a very timid spirit, was able to pray that her parents might be supported under the privation they were about to suffer." I shall never forget the tenderness, and faith, and love, and devotion with which, having desired all others to withdraw, she poured forth her last audible prayer for herself and us." "Sustained by a humble hope of the mercies of God through her Redeemer and Intercessor, she was enabled to bear her sufferings with patience and resignation, and to preserve a composure which even surprised herself. On the very morning of the last day of her life she had desired a favorite female attendant to ask her physician, whether or not there was any hope of her recovery, 'but if not,' she added, 'all is well.' She expired at last like a person falling asleep—scarcely a groan, and not the least struggle. I am almost bound in gratitude to the Giver of all good to call in my friends to rejoice with me over such an instance of Divine goodness, and the consciousness of our dear child's being safe is a cordial of inestimable efficacy."

To Mr. Babington he opens still more freely all the feelings of his heart in the review of this affecting

scene. "There was none of that exultation and holy joy which are sometimes manifested by dying Christians. But I know not that my judgment does not rest with more solid confidence on her humble composure and consciousness of her own unworthiness, with an affectionate casting of herself on her Redeemer and Intercessor. The day before she expired, she sent all out but her mother and me, and concluded some declarations of her humble hope in the mercies of God through Christ with a beautiful prayer addressed to her Saviour. And she had remarked to her mother that she never had before understood the meaning and value of Christ's intercession. My dear friend, I must stop—you are a father."

On the day of his daughter's funeral he was kept at home by the extreme coldness of the weather, and when the band of mourners had set out he went into his solitary chamber to commune with his God. "I went and saw the coffin. How vain the plumes, etc., when the occasion is considered, and the real state of humiliation to which the body is reduced! I must elsewhere note down the mercies and loving-kindnesses of our God and Saviour in this dispensation; above all, the exceeding goodness of giving us grounds for an assured persuasion that all is well with her; that she is gone to glory. When I look back on my past life, and review it, comparing especially the numerous, almost innumerable, instances of God's kindness to me with my unworthy returns, I am overwhelmed, and can with truth adopt the language of the Publican, God be merciful to me a sinner. Every one knows, or may know, his own sins, the criminality of which varies according to his opportunities of improvement, obligations and motives to obedience, advantages and means of grace,



favours and loving-kindnesses, pardons and mercies. It is the exceeding goodness of God to me, and the almost unequalled advantages I have enjoyed, which so fill me with humiliation and shame. My days appear few when I look back, but they have been any thing but evil. My blessings have been of every kind, and of long continuance; my being made the instrument of bringing forward the Abolition; my helping powerfully the cause of Christianity in India; my never having been discredited, but being always supported on all public occasions. There would be no end of the enumeration, were I to put down all the mercies of God. My escape from drowning by a sudden suggestion of Providence. My never having been disgraced for refusing to fight a duel. Then all my domestic blessings. Marrying as late as thirty-six, yet finding one of the most affectionate of wives. Six children, all of them attached to me beyond measure. And though we have lost dear Barbara, yet in the main, few men ever had such cause for thankfulness on account of the love of their children towards them. Then my social blessings. No man ever had so many kind friends; they quite overwhelm me with their goodness, and show the wisdom there has been in my cultivating my friendships with men of my own rank, and remaining quietly in it, instead of trying to rise in life myself, or to make friends among men of rank; above all, the wisdom of selecting religious men for friends. The great and noble now all treat me with respect, because they see I am independent of them, and some I believe feel real attachment to me. Then my having faculties sufficient to make me respectable—a natural faculty of public speaking—though the complaint in my eyes sadly hinders me in acquiring knowledge, and in writing. Then, almost

above all, my having been rendered the instrument of much spiritual good by my work on Christianity. How many, many have communicated to me that it was the means of their turning to God! Then all this continued so long, and in spite of all my provocations. These it would be wrong to put down, but my heart knows and feels them, and I trust ever will. And it is a great mercy that God has enabled me to maintain a fair, consistent, external course, so that I never have brought disgrace on my Christian profession. Praise the Lord, O my soul!

“And now, Lord, let me devote myself more solemnly and more resolutely to Thee, desiring more than I ever yet have done to dedicate my faculties to Thy glory and service.”

On the 4th of January Mr. Wilberforce returned with his diminished family to Marden Park; a lease of which he had purchased; where his recent loss, as well as his decreasing powers of body, tended to detain him.

But though his bodily strength was visibly impaired, the fire of his spirit was unquenched, and he longed to be still active in his Master's work. “I am sometimes,” he told his friends, “quite grieved at the idea of my probably not being able to do a little good yet before I quit the stage; and the seventy-first Psalm is strongly impressed upon me, especially the verse: ‘Forsake me not when I am old and gray-headed.’ Yet perhaps this is in part only another form of selfishness; and the better feeling that which prompts me to acquiesce entirely in the disposal of God. If my chief object be that His will be done, what signifies it whether it be by me or not? He can raise up instruments at will, and I may be serving him more acceptably by cheerfully re-

tiring and giving place to younger and more active men."

But though stricken in his affections, feeble in health, and advanced in years, he did not allow these circumstances, any more than the wishes of friends and the endearments of his family, to diminish the ardor with which he still prosecuted the great purpose of his life. Writing to Mr. Stephen on an occasion which caused him to refer to the sacred character and happy results of the marriage tie, he says: "What a field is open for reflection on the nature and blessings of the institution of marriage, with all its domestic blessings! And how infinitely criminal is our conduct in interfering with the instincts and rights of nature, and counteracting the laws of God, by denying to the slaves the marriage bond! I really think I must bring forward (in Parliament) that subject, if no other particular of their situation. I thought of doing this, I mean of bringing forward the state of the slaves in the West-Indies, as long ago as 1780, when I wrote about it to James Gordon, who was going to the West-Indies; and whenever I have thought of going out of Parliament, the idea of leaving this great subject untouched, has given me pangs that have been very painful." He returned at once to the preparation of an address to the Emperor of Russia, which he procured to be translated into French, and forwarded to that monarch. Nor was his attention withdrawn from public events, and he resumed his place in Parliament, and was immediately so hard at work that at the close of the first week he breaks out with the exclamation: "Oh! what a blessing Sunday is! Interposed between the waves of worldly business like the divine path of the Israelites through Jordan." Even the quiet of Marden could not wean

him from his steady devotion to the cause of the African, and though from time to time he withdrew thither for rest, during the session of Parliament, yet it was always with the understanding that his coadjutors, Stephen and Macaulay, should summon him in time to participate at his post in the labors as they should find his presence required. He was, indeed, preparing to transfer the lead in the abolition, to younger hands.

When at Marden Park his family and friends were gathered round him, and he was reading, conversing, writing letters, and composing with all his usual diligence and vigor. He was soon deep in various books. "Ran over Cain—what diabolical wickedness! Looked into Swift's Letters—what a thoroughly irreligious mind—no trace of Sunday to be found in his journals, or letters to his most intimate friends." "I am going on with Thomas Scott's life, in dressing. What a truly great man old Scott was; acting for so many years on the highest principles, not only above money, but above vain-glory, or any other of the idols of men! I always valued him, but now that his character is viewed more distinctly, he really appears to have been a Christian hero. I never saw a book which I should recommend so strongly to the constant study of a minister." "The grand point for imitation, and may we both attend to it," he writes to his eldest son, "is his *integrity*. He was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile. No consideration of interest, gratification, or credit, could make him swerve consciously a hair's breadth from the line of duty. This, depend on it, is the best of all signs. I have often remarked that it has always ended eminently well with those in whom it has been visible. Such a one was Lord Teignmouth. I know no one quality which I always recognize with such heart-

felt pleasure in any persons whom I love." Lighter reading occupied the fragments of the evening. "Scott's new poem, *Halidon Hill*—very beautiful. I have been running over the *Fortunes of Nigel*, the best, I mean the most moral in its tendency, of any of Walter Scott's stories which I have heard, illustrating the ways of Providence, the character of men of the world, and their unfeeling selfishness."

In the midst of these wholesome domestic occupations, he was startled by the news of Lord Londonderry's death. "I am shocked by it," he tells Mr. Stephen.

"How strange is it, that though professing to live under the continual recollection of the uncertainty of life, yet when such an event as this takes place, we are as much astonished as if we had expected the man to be as sure of good old age as of his actual existence!"

The particulars of this tragical event had not yet transpired, but the next day supplied more distinct intelligence. "August 14th. S. brought a report from Oroydon that poor Londonderry had destroyed himself. I could not believe it. The *Courier*, however, and several letters, too clearly confirmed it. He was certainly deranged—the effect probably of continued wear and tear of mind. But the strong impression of my mind is, that it is the effect of the non-observance of the Sunday, both as abstracting from politics, from the constant recurrence of the same reflections, and as correcting the false views of worldly things, and bringing them down to their true diminutiveness." "All the time that I have been writing," he concludes a letter this day to Mr. Stephen, "poor Castlereagh has been in my mind. I never was so shocked by any incident. He really was the last man in the world who appeared likely to be carried away

into the commission of such an act! So cool, so self-possessed. It is very curious to hear the newspapers speaking of incessant application to business, forgetting that by the weekly admission of a day of rest, which our Maker has graciously enjoined, our faculties would be preserved from the effects of this constant strain. I am strongly impressed by the recollection of your endeavor to prevail on the lawyers to give up Sunday consultations, in which poor Romilly would not concur. If he had suffered his mind to enjoy such occasional remissions, it is highly probable the strings would never have snapped as they did, from over-tension. Alas! alas! poor fellow! I did not think I should feel for him so very deeply."

In a subsequent letter to Mr. Bankes, he reiterates the same opinion: "I must say that the occurrence of the same catastrophe to Whitbread, Romilly, and Londonderry has strongly enforced on my mind the unspeakable benefits of the institution of the Lord's day—for I do not like to call it the Sabbath, as I do not quite consider it in the light in which it is viewed by many religious men. I am persuaded that to withdraw the mind one day in seven from its ordinary train of thoughts and passion, and to occupy it in contemplating subjects of a higher order, which by their magnitude make worldly interests shrink into littleness, has the happiest effect on the physical and moral system. It gives us back on the Monday to the contemplation of our week-day business, cooled and quieted, and it is to be hoped with sentiments abated, and prejudices softened."

It were almost incredible, if the evidence were not afforded by his private memoranda, as well as the testimony of friends, how much he still labored at the abo-

lition cause. Whether it was urging the ministry to adopt and carry out his plans, writing earnestly to foreigners of distinction, and the Emperor of Russia, or attending to the duties of committee-man of the various institutions; in all the various modes in which he could operate to promote the cause, he was still acting with the energy of youth diminished in its power but unsubdued. And weak as were his eyes, it involved him much in correspondence of such a nature as could be intrusted to no one but himself, bringing him sometimes no less than twenty packets of letters by each mail.

He had left home in the middle of September, and travelling from house to house, visited many of his friends, each of whom in turn delighted to gather round him their own circle of acquaintance, whilst in addition to these claims of society, a tide of letters overtook him at each halt. Here was no room for idleness. "I thank you most sincerely for your visit," he heard from Mr. Buxton, with whom the series had commenced; "I shall disappoint myself if I do not gather solid benefit from it. I believe I told you how much surprised I was at your industry." His progress led him on to many of his earlier haunts; Elmdon, Rothley Temple, Yoxall Lodge, and Apley, "the house of an honest Tory," were all visited in turn; and many interesting notices are scattered through his diary. "C. knew Canning well at Eton; he never played at any games with the other boys; quite a man, fond of acting, decent, and moral. Dr. Parr violent against him in public company; says: 'I know the interior of the man, and despise and abhor him.'"

From Cromer Hall, the residence of F. Buxton, Esq., he paid Felbrig a visit, and in its library turned over

with great interest many of the books which were "full of Windham's marks." "Windham's mind," he said, "was in the last degree copious, the soil was so fertile, scratch where you pleased, up came white clover. He had many of the true characteristics of a hero, but he had one great fault as a statesman, he hated the popular side of any question." His companion quoted Pope—

"So much they hate the crowd, that if the throng  
Go right by chance, they purposely go wrong."

"It was exactly so," he replied, "and I had a melancholy proof of it in the instance of the slave trade. When the abolition had but few friends, he was all on our side, but as the nation drew towards us, he retreated, and at last on the division in 1807, he was one of the sixteen who voted against us."

"Whilst at S., sat three quarters of an hour with Robert Hall, who quite himself. He eulogized highly Scott's life, and old Scott himself; especially a sermon he heard from him in Robinson's pulpit from 2 Pet. 3: 'Knowing I must soon put off this tabernacle as the Lord hath showed me.' 'It was a sermon,' he exclaimed repeatedly in a most animated way, 'quite above all criticism.'" One entry in his journal is highly characteristic: "L. off to Birmingham to hear Hall preach to-morrow; I should have liked it, but thought it wrong. In attending public worship, we are not to be edified by talent, but by the Holy Spirit, and therefore we ought to look beyond the human agent."

Various incidents in this excursion had revived more than one acquaintance which time had almost obliterated. One such event led to a correspondence of unusual interest. To his college friend Dr. Frewen he wrote: "It is always with a sort of melancholy



pleasure, that I address an old friend after a long period has elapsed without personal intercourse. The mind naturally casts a backward glance over the retrospect, and in the experience of all there has been some loss or another which renders the review affecting. These emotions have been this very day called forth by breakfasting with our old friend Carr, whom I had seen but once for above thirty years, and now I am writing to another old friend in very nearly similar circumstances." Dr. Frewen's answer alluded to some coldness which he imagined had grown up between them, ("of which I was quite unconscious,") and led him to take a full and interesting review of his life since the time of their early intercourse.

"ELMDON HOUSE, NEAR COVENTRY, *Dec. 6, 1822.*

"MY DEAR SIR: Not a single day has passed since I received your interesting letter, in which I have not wished, I may rather say longed, to answer it. I really am impatient to state to you some, for it would take far more eyesight than I can spare to state all, of the sentiments and feelings you have-called forth. But let me begin by expressing that strong confirmation your letter gives to my favorite doctrine, and I must do myself the justice to say practice, when we have to deal with any one of whom we are disposed to think at all favorably, of frankly stating every matter of complaint we conceive ourselves to have against him, instead of suffering it to settle on its lees, if I may use the expression, and acquire augmented strength and color by being kept within our own bosoms. It is really true, that I was not aware of having exhibited any coldness towards you in my behavior, and also that I have utterly forgot, if ever I knew, the circumstance in your

behavior toward me, to which you refer, as having originated in a mistake, and from which I am sorry to hear you suffered real pain.

"I am pressed for time and have been so much in the same situation ever since I got your letter that I have not been able to reflect upon it, or by calling up the recollection of long-past incidents to bring before me, if possible, the circumstances to which you allude. You therefore have my first thoughts, though I have had your letter for some days in my possession.

"Various are the emotions which the retrospect of my life is calculated to produce in me; but those of thankfulness for the wholly undeserved, and yet multiplied mercies and bounties of God are, I hope, uppermost. You can not but remember, what I can never review but with humiliation and shame, the course I ran at college, and during the three or four first years of my parliamentary life which immediately succeeded it. Yet in justice to myself it is only fair to state, that at least as much pains had been taken by my nearest relatives and guardians to make me dissipated and vain, and though they did not mean it, vicious also, as are commonly used to counteract these dispositions; and forgive me, my dear sir, if opening my heart to you with frankness, and trusting to your considering my letter as written in confidence of your secrecy, I add that even at college most of those very men who ought to have used both authority and influence (and of the latter at least I was susceptible) to root out these propensities, and to implant better, rather confirmed than abated them. I must do both you and Cookson the justice to exempt you in a good degree from this charge, though to be honest with you, not entirely. For would not the golden rule have prompted you to use towards

me the language of a friend, if not of a father? (My natural father I lost when eight years old, and my grandfather and uncle soon after I went to Cambridge.) Ought you not to have urged me to look forward, and even on principles of sound human wisdom, much more on Christian principles, to consider what must be the issue of the course of life I was pursuing, and of the choice I was making of associates and friends? That though while my youthful spirits should remain I might continue an entertaining companion, yet that I should ere long bitterly lament that I had suffered the years and circumstances which supplied opportunities for acquiring useful knowledge, and even still more for cultivating and strengthening the intellectual powers, to pass away wholly unimproved? Ought you not to have reminded me of the great account I had to render of the talents committed to my stewardship, and to have enforced on me the base ingratitude, to say nothing of the guilt, of making such an unworthy return to the Giver of all good for all the uncommon blessings which had been lavished on me with such exceeding prodigality? (I allude to my having been born in England in the eighteenth century, and not when a man of my weakly body would have been useless and contemptible if he had not been exposed in his infancy, to my having a handsome fortune, my being born in the middle rank of life, and my having, I hope, a fair proportion of natural talent, and a cheerful and not an anxious temper, one of the greatest comforts in life; but there would be no end to the enumeration. I may fill up the line with, etc., etc., etc.) You did not spend night after night at cards with me, but did you suggest to me the fate of the unprofitable servant?

“All this went on, with grief and shame I say it, till

by degrees I came to myself; *for to no one can the phrase be more justly applicable.* This began in the summer and autumn of 1785, and was carrying on in the winter of 1785-6, and in the following spring, when blessed, forever blessed be God, I adopted those principles, to which, though I am but too well aware very imperfectly, I have ever since made it the great business of my life to conform my character, I should rather say my dispositions, and tempers, and conduct. Of course I then took a survey of the past and the future. Providence had placed me in a situation which I must say I still think one of the most honorable that any man can possess—that of member for Yorkshire. How was I to proceed? My religion taught me the duty of devoting all my faculties and powers as a debt of gratitude to my reconciled Father in Christ Jesus, as well as of reasonable service to my Creator, Preserver, and continual Benefactor. And I was to labor more abundantly than the men of the world, who looked only to gain or to glory for their recompense. For ‘what do ye more than others,’ was our Saviour’s language to his disciples. You know but too well how sadly empty I then was; how utterly destitute of the habits no less than of the knowledge I ought to have possessed. My business, therefore, manifestly was to employ as diligently as I could in study as much as possible of my recesses from Parliament; and as I knew I could do far less in any house of my own, for many years I quartered myself for nearly all the time Parliament was not sitting, with different friends, who suffered me to breakfast in my own room, and live as much as I pleased the life of a student. Once I was with Cookson; (poor fellow, it is with a sigh that I write his name: he and his wife both gone, and I left;) and ever after with

Gisborne in Staffordshire, and Babington in Leicestershire. Thus I went on until I married, in 1797.

"I have gone into this narrative because you are concerned in it. You will see at once that having no house of my own, except that either in or near London, from which I attended the House of Commons, I could not ask any of my old friends to come about me under my own roof—otherwise remembering our old habits of social intercourse, I think it is most probable I should have endeavored to renew them—yet while I am writing, a new idea has suggested itself. I do not recollect having sent you a book of a religious nature which I published in 1797, just before my marriage; if not, I gave you reason to complain of me for failing in the performance of an act of friendship; for in truth, one of the chief objects I had in view in writing and publishing that work, was to explain to my friends the causes of the change which they witnessed in my 'goings-on,' (to use a coarse but expressive phrase,) and the principles which I could not but earnestly wish and pray that all whom I valued and loved should also embrace. Now if I did not send it to you, I really believe the omission must have arisen from forgetfulness. But it was an unfriendly omission, and I beg your pardon for it, and will repair the fault. I grant, however, that though the interest I took in the well-being of my old friends was even greater than it had been before the change I have been speaking of, yet that from natural and obvious causes, we were not likely to be such agreeable intimates to each other as heretofore. There was no longer the 'eadem velle' and 'eadem nolle' in the same degree, and therefore we were likely to retain full as strong a desire to ~~serve~~ such friends as formerly, but not to have the same pleasure in each

other's society. But as you and I have never, to my knowledge, been in the same place, we never have had opportunities of seeing much of each other. Thus, my dear sir, I have explained myself to you without reserve, and before I conclude, let me say a few words concerning that same publication, which I trust you will still do me the favor to accept and peruse.

"It is not from any idea of its literary merit that I entreat you to peruse it. I am quite aware that it is much too diffuse and even tautologous. But I am more and more convinced by subsequent experience, that the character and practices which are recommended in it, are such as the New Testament prescribes to us, and such as alone will bring peace at the last. You will at once, however, see that my main object was to endeavor to convince my friends that the mere outward profession of Christian principles could not be all that was required, when such strong figures were used and expressive explanations given to describe the dispositions and affections which were to be formed in us here, in order to qualify us for a better world hereafter.

"As to the other points to which I drew your attention in my former letter, I can say but a very few words on them. It is very natural that I should not have formed a very correct idea of your political sentiments, considering our not having exchanged a word on the subject for between thirty and forty years. I am myself decidedly convinced that PARTY is one of the chief evils which in politics we have now reason to regret. This it is, which in the opinion of many well-meaning (though I do not think them rightly judging) men, renders governing by influence necessary; so that it has become a settled contest, whoever is minister, between crown influence on one side and systematic oppo-

sition on the other. Of course I do not mean to condemn all coöperation of like-minded men, and I know that if I were to have made such an acknowledgment in a public assembly, the ready reply would be, Why, what is that but party? It is certainly one of the innumerable cases in which the fault is in the abuse, in the excess of the thing, not in its nature."

Mr. Buxton, to whom he intrusted the lead in the House of Commons in the great question of emancipation, having written to him in terms of high eulogium on the industry which marked the employment of his time during a few days they spent together, he replied as follows:

*To T. F. Buxton, Esq.*

"You intimated a high sense of my industry. Alas! my dear friend, truly is it said in Holy Writ: 'The heart knoweth its own bitterness.' You little know how I reproach myself for not having expended wisely and economically the many more years of health than from my bodily frame I could reasonably have expected to be employed on earth in my Master's business. I do not mean that I actually waste much time! for, honestly speaking, I am conscious that I do not; but I am sadly chargeable with the fault of not expending my time with judgment.

"But alas! my dear friend, my want of industry is most exhibited, (to the Searcher of hearts, at least,) in my not duly availing myself of all opportunities of forming and strengthening the habit prescribed by the apostle: 'Whatever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father through Him.' We all are apt to forget that the great object of our lives should be to acquire that

new nature which is to qualify us to live in heaven, or, in Scriptural language, is to make us meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the saints in light. Now this new state is produced, blessed be God, in various ways, and we are never cultivating it more efficiently than when, under the influence of right motives, we are doing good to our fellow-creatures, especially if our active services are attended with self-denial. But the formation of the right temper and character is the main thing still. God can effect His own purposes by His own agents as He will. 'They also serve who only stand and wait;' and, indeed, they often are proceeding in the same great work of cultivating and strengthening the right dispositions and tempers—humility, submission, patience, love, peace, joy, child-like affiance, far more prosperously than those who to the view of their fellow-Christians may be abounding in all the works of faith and labors of love. Let this, my friend, be your grand work and mine, and to this end let our industry be mainly directed. One thing is needful.

"Now a gracious Providence has kindly allotted to us the far easier as well as pleasanter line of active service, and let me assure you in a parenthesis, that I have often rejoiced of late years in thinking of my having you for an associate and successor, as indeed I told you. Now, my dear B., my remorse is sometimes very great, from my consciousness that we have not been duly active in endeavoring to put an end to that system of cruel bondage, which for two centuries has prevailed in our West-Indian colonies; and my idea is, that a little before Parliament meets, three or four of us should have a secret cabinet council, wherein we should deliberate and



decide what course to pursue. I can scarcely say what pain it would give me, were I to be unable before I go hence to declare my sentiments and feelings on this head."

## CHAPTER XLII.

He was urged by his friends at this time to prepare and publish a "manifesto" on the subject of Negro Slavery; and to this, and an Introduction to Witherspoon on Regeneration, he devoted himself with great assiduity. The work on Regeneration was of a practical character, and had long been a favorite with him; and this essay was prepared at the solicitation of a Glasgow publisher, the friend and one of the elders of the church of Dr. Chalmers. The other work was intended as the *mise en campagne*—to adopt the phrase of Mr. Stephen—of the party, in their renewed efforts to promote the melioration of the condition of the Negro slaves, and their final emancipation. This address cost him much labor, and his progress with it was but slow. "I am become," he says, "heavy and lumbering, and not able at once to start into a canter, as I could twenty years ago. Happily, it is a good road, and in a right direction." He was jealous even of the domestic enjoyments which interfered with his work, and yet he says: "Never did any father experience more tender and affectionate assiduities, and such an anxiety both for my health and comfort. No one ever surely had such reason to be thankful for this great blessing—one of the very greatest in advancing years." In such natural outbreaks of thanksgiving his full heart was ever pouring forth its

gratitude. He could not mark in his diary, "a sharp frost and a fine day," without adding, "how charming are the varieties of our climate." The pamphlet on Negro Slavery met with a hearty reception. "Its kindness and forbearance toward individuals," remark his sons, "rendered its earnest expostulations irresistible. The fervor of his manner was so tempered by Christian candor, and by the wisdom of age, that no heart could be closed when he spoke. 'Its perusal,' he was told by a West-India proprietor, 'has so affected me, that should it cost me my whole property, I surrender it willingly, that my poor negroes may be brought not only to the liberty of Europeans, but especially to the liberty of Christians.'"

But his services in Parliament were now often interrupted by his increasing infirmities. "My lungs," he says, (April 15th,) "are affected, and my voice weak; so I am forced to keep the house, though yesterday Canning's explanation about the Spanish negotiations. To-night the motion against Plunket, when, above all the House, it would have become me to move the previous question. I greatly regret that I could not go, but I must accustom myself to be willing to retire. Even a pagan could say, solve senescentem, etc. A Christian, considering himself the servant of God, does his Master's business so long as He signifies His will by action and no less by retiring. I hope I have been acting on this principle (applying 'He must increase, but I must decrease') to other and younger men. And oh! may I be enabled to walk by faith, not sight; and then all will be clear and easy, and not unpleasant." "How cheering is the consideration that all events are under the guidance of infinite wisdom and goodness, and that we are hastening to a world of secure peace and joy!"

The foundation of his graceful and easy retirement from the foremost place which he had so long filled, was laid in the deep Christian humility which gave its tone to the following letter :

*To J. S. Harford, Esq.*

“HOUSE OF COMMONS, *April 25.*

“MY DEAR FRIEND: Do not measure by the tardiness of my reply the force of the feelings excited by your last friendly note. The most interesting part I shall like to talk to you upon. O my friend! you struck a string which vibrates in my heart in full unison. When I review all my past life, and consider ever since it has been my general intention to live to the glory of God, and in obedience to His laws, what have been my obligations, and what ought to be the amount and the effects of my gratitude, what my means and opportunities of usefulness, what the scantiness of my performances, and with what alloy my motives have been debased ; alas ! alas ! my friend, I have no peace, no rest, but in the assurances of pardon and acceptance to penitent believers in Christ Jesus ; and I adopt the language of the Publican, with the declarations of mercy and grace held out to the contrite and broken-hearted. What a blessed truth it is, that it is our duty to be confident in the undeserved bounty and overflowing loving-kindness of our heavenly Father ! Farewell.

“Ever affectionately,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

The lead in the further prosecution of the work of emancipation having been taken from this time by Mr. Buxton, our notices of its progress will be only in-

cidental, and such as are necessary to illustrate the interest taken in it by the prime mover in the work of meliorating the condition of the negro race. He took once more a residence in town, in order to be near the House and able to attend its session, though even this taxed to the utmost his feeble physical powers; and his table crowded sometimes by "a consultation on our slave cause," sometimes, as of old, by most variously assorted guests, assumed somewhat the same appearance as it had worn in the days of his residence in Kensington Gore. Nothing, however, interrupted the regular flow of his paternal feeling, and even at the most busy times his sons were receiving from him the most affectionate and thoughtful letters.

To ———.\*

"LONDON, *June 14, 1823.*

"MY VERY DEAR ———: I scarcely need assure you, that however much I am occupied, I am never intentionally long without taking up my pen to write to you. There can be no business so important to me as the well-being of my children. But not seldom I am cheated out of my time; as I am at this moment. The Archbishop of Dublin was to breakfast with me, and I desired Mr. Wilson to come a little before, that I might introduce them to each other, in conformity with a principle on which I have acted for many years, and which I recommend to you early in life, that of bringing together all men who are like-minded, and may one day combine and concert for the public good.

"Never omit any opportunity, my dear ———, of getting acquainted with any good or useful man. More

\* Aged 18.

perhaps depends on the selection of acquaintance than on any other circumstance of life. Acquaintance are the raw material, from which are manufactured friends, husbands, wives. I wish it may please God that you may have some good ones to choose from on your first settling at Oxford. T—— seems a very pleasing young man, but I own I covet a much higher praise for my sons; and oh! that I could have reason to believe they were steadily and sturdily setting themselves to act on that beautiful description of the true Christian's character which we had two or three mornings ago in our family service, 'among whom ye shine as lights in the world!' O my dearest ——! what would I give to see you a *φωστήρ εν τῷ κόσμῳ*. The idea has brought tears into my eyes and almost disqualified me from going on with my letter. My dearest ——, aim high, do not be contented with being hopeful; strive to be a Christian in the highest sense of that term. How little do you know to what services Providence may call you! If, when I was at your age, any one had pointed to me and said, That youth in a few years will be member for the first county in England, it would have been deemed the speech of a madman. But I can truly say I would as much rather see you a Buchanan, as eternity is beyond any given portion of time in the estimate of a reasonable being.

"By my time and eyesight are expended, and though I seem as full of matter as ever, I must stop—not, however, without assuring you how earnestly I shall pray for you to-morrow, (inter Sylvas Mardeni,) that you 'may be strengthened with might in the inner man.'

"The young men of our day are in no danger of being called to the encounter of fire and sword—to burning at the stake; but then the consequence of this abso-

lution, is their not being prepared for that milder form of persecution which they may be called on to face. But all may be done through prayer—almighty prayer, I am ready to say; and why not? For that it is almighty, is only through the gracious ordination of the God of love and truth. Oh! then pray, pray, pray, my dearest —; but then remember to estimate your state on self-examination not by your prayers, but by what you find to be the effects of them on your character, tempers, and life. But this opens a wide prospect, and I must stop. Most reluctantly, farewell.

“Ever most affectionately yours,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

The conclusion of this letter is a picture of the tone of his religion; fruitful in the liveliest affections, but tested unceasingly by its more substantial fruits. “I should wish to know,” he said after hearing of a happy death, “the man’s previous character; for such expressions of confidence in the Saviour are not satisfactory to me unless they are accompanied by other marks of practical religion.”

Having given up his tenancy of Marden Park, Mr. Wilberforce was now looking out for some summer quarters, at which to fix his family. No diary of the next few months was found amongst his papers, but his correspondence will supply the blank, and enable us to trace his steps. Shortly before leaving London he thus mentions to a son the place upon which he had decided for the gathering of the family.

“BROMPTON, *July 29, 1828.*

“MY VERY DEAR —: Your disappointment at the arrangement which prevented your paying us a pop-

visit can scarcely have been greater than ours; but it is a great pleasure to me to think that we shall meet D. V. ere long, and spend some time together. It will then be your duty to take plenty of air and exercise; and in selecting Barmouth for our quarters I was principally decided by the consideration that the place would tend to render the duty a greater pleasure to you all. Barmouth, I understand, is very near the most ferocious and untamed of all the Welsh mountain-lions, though Snowdon may take the lead a little in mere bulk."

On his road to Barmouth he wrote to one who had shared his excursion to the Lakes, and who had been the most intimate friend of his eldest daughter.

*"July 30.*

"MY DEAR —: Any one whom I love at all, I seem to love better in a land of mountains; and I understand that of all the Welsh lions, Cader Idris, beside the roots of which Barmouth is situated, if not the most respectable in size, is the wildest and most untamable in his properties. Yet certain recollections will chasten the vivid coloring of this glowing prospect, and though with a melancholy now become not unpleasing, because so enriched and animated by hope, will a little sadden the gayety of the scene. Fancy would paint for itself a renewal of the expedition in which I rode by your side in scaling the heights of Skiddaw, or in which Southey skipped as light and elastic as a bird from stone to stone in tracking his path through Brothersdale, near Wyburn Water. There was a chapel and a school—not that school tyrannized over by that Queen Elizabeth of school-mis-



tresses at whose nod the terrified children trembled in Langdale. How naturally we are drawn into retracing our steps when we look back with interest on the road we travelled!

"I have lately been hearing the first hundred pages of Southey's *Peninsular War*, in which he gives you a bird's-eye view of the French principles, and character, and conduct under Buonaparte; and they have re-kindled in me that warmth of gratitude, which I own I think is far too little felt by my countrymen, even by the considerate and serious of them, towards the great Disposer of all things for having delivered us from the imminent danger to which we were exposed, if not of becoming the prey of that ferocious and unprincipled tyrant, yet of having our country the seat of warfare, with all the unspeakable and almost innumerable evils and miseries which we must in that case have endured, though we had been ultimately victorious. One of Buonaparte's generals, in the true spirit of his school, (Augereau, I think,) is said to have declared in speaking of this very subject: 'Let me land with 100,000 men in England, and I do not say I will keep possession of the country for France, but this I say, that the country shall be brought into such a state, that no Englishman shall be able to live in it with comfort for a hundred years to come.'

"What a fiend-like spirit! to contemplate with savage joy the pains of his inflicting, which should be felt by generations yet unborn. The mind that could cherish such a sentiment must indeed be enmity itself against God, whose nature and whose name is love. O my dear friend! what emotions are called forth by the very mention of that infinitely glorious and gracious Being, the sum of all perfection, who condescends to grant us

even here a measure of His Spirit and nature, and of whom we are told that when He shall appear we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is. Oh! may we verify our title to that blessed distinction, by our practical observation of the apostle's declaration, that every one that hath this hope purifieth himself even as He is pure. May we be enabled to prosecute our endeavors after this blessed state with more unceasing and strenuous vigor, and may we have reason hereafter to look back with mutual thankfulness towards each other on account of our having been mutually useful to each other in this greatest of all lines of service. Believe me to be

"Ever very affectionately yours,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

Even in the times when his attention was most absorbed by his parliamentary engagements he would write to his sons letters full of the choicest wisdom and expressive of the warmth of his affection, and he scarce ever took up his pen to address one of his children that the sense of the importance of heavenly things and of the responsibility of this parental relation did not draw him into some manifestation of his anxiety to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Their subsequent abandonment of the vital truths of the Gospel for the deadly errors of the Roman apostasy can not with any show of justice be ascribed to a failure on his part to impress them with the value of divine truth, but must stand with the examples of old, (1 Epis. to Corinth., chap. 10,) to prove that no amount of privilege, and no advantages of instruction can place us or our offspring beyond the reach

of temptation, or remove the corrupt bias of the carnal mind.

To one of his sons, aged thirteen, he thus writes:

“MY DEAREST —: Though it is quite contrary to my ordinary practice to write letters on a Sunday, yet having been unable to prepare a few lines for you yesterday, I feel myself warranted by our blessed Saviour's principles and example in this respect, even in the case of the Jewish Sabbath, to take up my pen to-day, in order that I may meet my dear boy on his birth-day with the assurance of his father's tenderest concern for his temporal, and far more for his eternal happiness. O my dear boy! could you look into my heart, and witness all the anxious thoughts and anxieties that are therein of which you are the beloved subject—could you hear the earnest prayers that I put up for you—you would then form a better idea than you now can of the liveliness and depth and force of a father's affectionate solicitude for his much-loved child. And on this day especially my prayers are poured forth, that the gracious Father of the spirits of all flesh, who has promised that He will hear the prayers of them that call upon Him, may hear my supplication on your behalf, that as you have already enjoyed, and still enjoy many advantages which few others possess, you may not at length render them only the cause of your greater condemnation. It makes me tremble, however, sometimes, to reflect on the peculiar degree of your responsibility. Yet why should I despond? I know that God will be faithful to his promises, and that He will give his Holy Spirit to them that ask it with sincerity and earnestness. And will not my dear boy thus ask? Has it been already bestowed? I hope it has in some

degree. But oh ! grieve it not. Respect the still small voice of conscience. Try to please your Saviour by practising daily little acts of self-denial for His sake, since He does not call you to greater sacrifices. Guard against thinking of other things when you are saying your prayers, and try then to feel as if you were in the presence of God and of Jesus Christ. Think of all that Christ suffered for you ; and also that He is at this moment wishing to bring you to heaven, that you may not only escape the flames of hell, but that you may enjoy the unspeakable graces of that blessed state, where is the fullness of joy and pleasure for evermore. And when Christ is thus thinking of you, will you not think of Him ? Between seven and eight especially, I shall imagine you in your own little room, and also between twelve and one in the day : I shall retire myself into my own room and pray earnestly for you. Remember, my dear boy, that we do not naturally love God and Christ, and desire above all things to please them, as we ought ; but we must have this love and desire before we can be admitted into heaven : and the change from the one state into the other must be effected by the Holy Spirit. My heart is very full. I can scarcely refrain from tears, though people are coming into the room ; and I shall allow myself to pour them forth by and by for you with my prayers, when I get alone. May God bless you, my dearest boy. May He enable you to remember your Creator and Redeemer in the days of your youth ; that you may grow up to be the joy of your old father's heart in the days of weakness and decrepitude, and that he may at length meet you in a better world, to part no more forever. Again and again may God in Christ be your everlasting portion.

“ Ever, ever yours,

“ W. WILBERFORCE.”

It was with intense interest he watched the progress of the cause of abolition. Entering into the condition of the West-India planter with deep sympathy, though without any abatement of his earnestness for the emancipation of the slave. "I wish," he writes, "that I could be as easy about insurrections as you and Stephen. That they would not happen if the people on the spot really apprehended them, and would take reasonable means of guarding against them, I verily believe, but *rebus sic stantibus*, I have ever been, I own, and still am, afraid on that head. Yet what can we do but act as cautiously as justice and humanity will allow?"

The correspondence of the summer was occupied with this topic, and the affairs which grew out of it, until his return to the neighborhood of London, having purchased a house at Brompton Grove. A nuisance of a very decided character was discovered soon after taking possession of it, which called for consultations with architects and builders, in the hope of being able to remedy it. This was a serious annoyance to his family, but did not disturb his equanimity. "It is only," he said, "as if I had lost £4000 or £5000. These are the things that season the insipidity of life. Johnson says: 'All men have their troubles and annoyances, but the man of the world is too wise to talk of them.' I am sure an old man should be too wise to feel them." At the same time he received from a gentleman in need a letter asking him for £100, of which he remarked: "These are the things that go to my heart." On the opening of the session of Parliament the Abolition cause was again brought forward, and though no longer the recognized leader in the cause, he spoke long and earnestly on the subject: an effort by which he was much overcome, and which left behind the evident traces of

over-exertion. Yet he did not desert his place or its duties; and after a long and anxious sitting, in which other affairs of high national importance claimed his attention, he went to his room unwell, and was soon in the utmost danger from an inflammation of the lungs. His sons say, his perfect patience, and the bursts of love and thankfulness which were ever breaking forth throughout this attack of illness, can never be forgotten by those who watched with the deepest anxiety beside the sick-bed of such a father. He was continually repeating what shortly before he had observed to Mr. Stephen: "No man has been more favored than I, for even when I am ill my complaints occasion little suffering." Beckoning to him one of his sons when he was scarce able to speak, he whispered: "At this moment I have your face before me when I left you at school in Leicestershire."

To Mr. Babington, who had expressed his pleasure at witnessing the great affection borne him by his family, he wrote in reply: "No physician can devise, and no money can purchase, such a cordial restorative to a sick man. And then how exceedingly favorable are these domestic blessings to a state of heart pleasing to God!" "How much have I seen some characters improved, even independently of all religious principles, by the softening and stimulating power which He has graciously imparted to these strong affections." His sons say: "It would indeed be strange if it had been otherwise. He was beloved in general society; but if he sparkled there, he shone at home. None but his own family could fully know the warmth of his heart, or the unequalled sweetness of his temper. With the strictest truth they can affirm, that never in the most unguarded moments of domestic privacy did they

see obscured, in word or action, the full sunshine of his kindest affections.

'His every deed and word that he did say  
Was like enchantment, which through both the eyes,  
And both the ears, did steal the heart away.' "

During his convalescence he thus closes a letter to Mrs. Hannah More: "I am eating, drinking, and sleeping, and airing, as the main business of life. But for this I have Lord Bacon's authority: indeed, I trust a still higher than his. For each and all of these is associated with a grateful sense of the loving-kindness of that gracious Being whose goodness and mercy continue to be so profusely poured out on me, and who thus bountifully strews with flowers the way, the narrow way, I humbly hope, that leads, if we obey His blessed drawings, to that better world wherein all will be congenial with the unalloyed and unobstructed influences of the God of holiness and love. But I am scarcely leaving myself room to say how deeply I feel your kindness, and that of many dear friends, in taking such an affectionate interest in my recovery. Really, were there no loss of time, it ought to be a sufficient recompense for all the suffering of sickness (but my sufferings were by no means such as yours) to have experienced such unexceedable, (I find no word ready made, so I must fabricate one) such unexceedable attentions by night and by day, as were incessantly lavished on me. How often did I think of the state of poor soldiers, or negro slaves, who, undergoing pains and miseries far greater than mine, were destitute of almost all my bodily alleviations, and still more of all my mental cordials! My dear friend, I must say farewell. Pray for me, that I may endeavor to use to the glory of God and the

benefit of my fellow-creatures, whatever measure of efficiency His good providence may allot me. The seventy-first psalm is often in my mind. May it be more and more applicable to me in its best purposes. Though in this letter I have been such an egotist, I assure you I am not such in mind. On the contrary, both my head and heart are teeming with sentiments and feelings called forth by the contemplation of the correspondent to whom I am writing. Your sheaves scarcely admit of an addition; but may you be spared to us yet a season, if it please God to excite the sympathies of the large circle of those who esteem and love you for your work's sake. You will witness, I doubt not, hereafter in your paradisiacal state, the blessed harvest which your labors will long continue to be the instrument of bringing into the granary of God."

The last entry of his diary before he was confined wholly to his bed, was, "Poor Smith the missionary, died in prison at Demerara! The day of reckoning will come;" and the first public business he attempted, after leaving his sick-room, was, (June 1st,) "Preparing for Smith the missionary's business. I was at the House the first time for eight weeks or more. Brougham made a capital speech, by Mackintosh well termed impregnable. I doubt not he will be great in reply. Mackintosh's own was most beautiful, his mind teemed with ideas." The decision was postponed till the 11th, on which occasion he spoke at large.

"The West-Indians," he said, "abhor alike the end we have in view, and the means by which we hope to reach it. They frankly avow that from the emancipation of their slaves they look for inevitable ruin; whilst all their prejudices are revolted by each of our remedial measures. If they agreed with us as to our grand ob-



ject, we might hope to lessen by degrees their aversion to our several steps; or were those measures singly acceptable to them, we might hope gradually and almost insensibly to lead them to our end. But what can we hope, when they abhor alike both means and end? It is with reluctance and pain I come forward, but I esteem it my bounden duty to protest against the policy on which we are now acting. '*Liberavi animam meam.*' May it please God to disappoint my expectations, and to render the result more favorable than I anticipate."

These prophetic words were the last which he uttered in the House of Commons. Ten days later he set off, after attending a meeting held in honor of James Watt, for Lord Gambier's seat at Iver; and on the road was seized with a new attack of illness. When he reached Lord Gambier's, he was "but just able to be helped up-stairs to bed," where he lay in an alarming state for almost a month. This second attack left him in so shattered a condition, as to enforce upon him the necessity of absolute repose, and as soon as he could move with safety he took possession of a small house bordering on Uxbridge Common.

Here he lived in entire seclusion, though by no means in idleness. "We have been living very quietly; never visting, scarcely receiving a single visitor. Often we have a little family reading in the evenings after tea, (Robertson's America,) which I should always like, if it did not compel me to write my letters in the morning, when I wish to be employed in more solid work. Oh! that God would enable me to execute my long-formed purpose of writing another religious book. I have also a wish to write something political; my own life, and Pitt's too, coming into the discussion."

In the autumn he resorted again to Bath, where he

met with many old friends, and from which he made excursions to the residences of those of congenial spirit; and he notices in his diary among others: "Sat with Hannah More about an hour and a half; she as animated as I ever knew her, quoting authors, many people, etc. Off about one, *after praying with her.*" As the month of December advanced, he "returned again to his cottage retirement near Uxbridge, to collect his children around him according to the good old English custom. I lay no little stress on the bringing together at Christmas all the members of the family, if it can be effected. Such an anniversary, annually observed, tends to heal any little divisions, and to cherish mutual attachments." And at the commencement of the year he says: "Our dear boys living in much harmony. What cause have I for gratitude, seeing my five children, my son's wife, and two grandchildren all round my table. Praise the Lord, O my soul!" While cheerfulness and enjoyment of the blessings by which he was surrounded was manifest to all, yet he was not insensible to the many causes of anxiety which must plant in the heart of every parent, aware of the corruption of our fallen nature, a sense of responsibility which, though not perceived by the superficial observer, all who are similarly exercised can appreciate. "I sometimes think," he said of himself, "that I have the art (though undesignedly) of concealing from my most intimate associates, my real character. One particular I doubt if you have ever observed. I ought, however, to say that it is not constant; but I am at times much more disposed to melancholy than you would imagine." And writing to Mr. Babington, he says: "The account I hear of you all from my son is very comfortable: at the same time I know that the young hands do not look

very deep in their view of people of our time of life : and that while all is outwardly cheerful, and therefore to their eyes unclouded sunshine, we parents may have our secret anxieties and griefs."

It would be scarcely possible, even after following the uniform, earnest, active course of his life through the long series of years in which it was dedicated to the service of Jesus and the good of his fellow-creatures, to conceive how multiplied and various were the modes in which he was still constantly following out the fixed purpose of his heart. It was not only that it might be said of him, "*Nihil tetigit quod non ornavit.*" This, though true, would be far short of the entire truth. There was nothing he touched which did not open for him an opportunity for the introduction of some reference to the hidden fountain of joy which diffused gladness to all around. The sorrows of his friends drew out the rich streams of consolation, and their cares elicited counsels of ghostly wisdom, while his advice on books and religious affairs in their various aspect proved his heart still to be fixed on its first love, and his views to remain unchanged on the great principles of truth. The following letter to the Rev. H. Venn exhibits his views on some important points : " It strikes me on reflection, that Doddridge's eight Sermons on Regeneration, and Witherspoon's Essay on Regeneration, would be better for the friend we conferred about, than any other publication that occurs to me. He seemed to want a deeper sense of a work to be wrought on the human heart by the power of God, and to be wrought by Him alone, as the apostle ascribes that ardent desire of going to heaven, which is one of the effects of the indwelling Spirit, to the power and workmanship of God—' now He that hath wrought us for that self-

same thing is God'—and, by the way, consult Pole's Synopsis for a note on wrought, *κατεργασμενος*, expolivit. Were he to have a just sense of the greatness of the change to be effected, and if he would study and consider the fair import of those passages which speak of the union between Christ and believers in St. John 6 : 15, (the Vine,) etc., and the 17th, the three or four verses following, 'neither pray I for these alone,' etc.; and if he would then compare these passages with St. Paul's prayers for his Christian disciples, in Eph. first and third chapters, and in Phil. 1, and Coloss. 1, he would become sensible how much more there is than he has hitherto conceived, in being a true Christian—and thus leading him to detect the scantiness of his own attainments, and discovering to him the earnestness with which he has been applying his faculties to earthly interests and objects, and how little he has been duly endeavoring to obtain those large communications of the Holy Spirit, which professing to believe the Scripture, he must admit he might have obtained, (for He is faithful that hath promised :) all this, accompanied with earnest prayer, would lead to that deep remorse, that brokenness of heart, which would make him welcome the Saviour as his deliverer from the power no less than the punishment of sin, and look to Him for wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Let him consider the addresses to the seven churches, and see how our Lord enforces on them the right affections of the heart. I have always found people more easily brought to see their sinful ingratitude to God and the Redeemer, than any other fault—and then let our friend consider how (Rom. 1) God is represented as giving the Gentiles up to their own lusts, because they were not thankful for the

comparatively trifling blessings they knew of. May God bless you, my dear friend, and your Christian efforts. Get our friend to prayer, and all will be well. I understand that charming daughter who lives with him, is truly pious. Let her pray for him too, and I am sanguine in hopes all will be well. I should like him to read the account of Dr. Bateman's conversion."

## CHAPTER XLIII.

ONE important question occupied his thoughts all through the autumn. His strength had been visibly impaired by the severe attacks of the spring and summer; and he was strongly recommended to retire from public life. He could not bring himself at once to acquiesce in this decision. "The idea of retiring and not endeavoring to bear" his "testimony once more in support of truth and righteousness," he found "very painful." This was not from any restless wish to be in action. "There was no particular," he had three years before this time declared to Dr. Chalmers, "in which his estimate of things had been more corrected than in his judgment of the comparative usefulness of different individuals. To express my sentiments briefly, I may say that I more and more enter into the spirit of that beautiful sonnet of Milton's on his blindness, ending

' Who best

Bear His mild yoke, they serve Him best—

They also serve who only stand and wait."

This quietness of mind was increased by his habitual reference of all that concerned himself to the leading of God's providence. In the course of this autumn, an arrangement was suggested to him by the friendly zeal of Sir John Sinclair, which would have removed him to

the calmer atmosphere of the Upper House. "To your friendly suggestion," was his remarkable reply, "respecting changing the field of my parliamentary labors, I must say a word or two, premising that I do not intend to continue in public life longer than the present Parliament. I will not deny that there have been periods in my life, when on worldly principles the attainment of a permanent, easy, and quiet seat in the legislature, would have been a pretty strong temptation to me. But, I thank God, I was strengthened against yielding to it. For (understand me rightly) as I had done nothing to make it naturally come to me, I must have endeavored to go to it; and this would have been carving for myself, if I may use the expression, much more than a Christian ought to do."

His reluctance to retire sprung from deep humility. It was not so much that he wished to do more, as that he regretted he had done so little.

To Mr. Harford he writes: "When I consider that my public life is nearly expired, and when I review the many years I have been in it, I am filled with the deepest compunction, from the consciousness of my having made so poor a use of the talents committed to my stewardship. The heart knows its own bitterness. We alone know ourselves, the opportunities we have enjoyed, and the comparative use we have made of them. But it is only to your friendly ear that I breathe out my secret sorrows. I might be supposed by others to be fishing for a compliment. Well, it is an unspeakable consolation that we serve a gracious Master, who giveth liberally and upbraideth not." This was no passing feeling. A year later he wrote to Mr. Gurney.

*To J. J. Gurney.*

*" October 24, 1825.*

"MY DEAR FRIEND: My eyes are indifferent, and were they ever so strong I should wear them out, were I to attempt to give expression to the sentiments and feelings with which my bosom is over-charged. Let us rejoice and bless God that we live in a land in which we are able to exert our faculties in mitigating the sufferings, redressing the wrongs, and above all, promoting the best interests of our fellow-creatures. I sometimes fear we are not sufficiently thankful for this most gratifying and honorable distinction; and perhaps I feel this the more strongly, because in the private ear of a Christian friend I will whisper, that though I should not speak truly if I were to charge my parliamentary life with sins of commission, (for I can call God to witness, so far as I can recollect, that I always spoke and voted according to the dictates of my conscience, for the public and not for my own private interest,) yet I am but too conscious of numerous and great sins of omission, many opportunities of doing good either not at all or very inadequately improved. Particularly, from an early period of my parliamentary life, I intended to propose a bill for greatly lessening the number of oaths, and once I carried on a previous inquiry, and had a committee formed for the purpose. But alas! alas! I have been forced to retire from public life re infectâ, though I must say that several times I had reason to believe that some other members, chiefly official men, would take the measure off my hands, and I always preferred employing others on such occasions, that I might not be said to be trying to monopolize. But my



friends deceived me. Believe me to be ever, my dear friend,

“Yours very affectionately,

“W. WILBERFORCE.”

If he now looked back on many plans of usefulness which he had left unaccomplished, it was not because his time had been passed in ease or self-indulgence, but because he had never learned to “stop his ears at the cry of the poor.” This was a sample of his life :

“I was with him once,” says Lord Clarendon, “when he was preparing to make an important motion in the House of Commons. While he was most deeply engaged, a poor man called, I think his name was Simkins, who was in danger of being imprisoned for a small debt. He could find no one to be bound for him. Wilberforce did not like to become his surety without inquiry ; it was contrary to a rule which he had made ; but nothing could induce him to send the man away. ‘His goods,’ said he, ‘will be sold, and the poor fellow will be totally ruined.’ I believe, at last, he paid the debt himself ; but I remember well the interruption which it gave to his business, which he would not resume till the case was provided for.”

To a son at college, he announced in the following letter his determination to withdraw from public life.

“NEAR UXBRIDGE, *Feb.* 1.

“MY DEAR — : I should not like you to hear from common rumor that I have decided to retire from public life, and therefore, though much pressed for time, I announce to you this to me important, and what from the affectionate concern my very dear—— takes in all that belongs to me, will be to him very interesting in-

telligence. It is to me almost like a change of nature to quit parliamentary life, all the particulars of which have been formed into habits during a course of almost forty-six years. But after mature reflection, the good I was likely to do in the House of Commons appeared to be outweighed by the probable danger to my life, and the consequent loss of any good I might yet do in a private station, either to my own family, or to a still wider circle. And it should be borne in mind, that in this comparison, all that may be done in private life was to be balanced, not against the effect of the labors of even a single session, but that of the occasional attendance to which alone my medical adviser would accede.

"What cause have I for thankfulness, that in withdrawing from the political circle, I retire into the bosom of a family whose affectionate assiduities would be sufficient to cheer the lowest state of poverty and depression, while I have all around me that can administer to my comfort, or rather enjoyment, in the evening of life! Praise the Lord, O my soul! Indeed, I hope I am in some degree, though not sufficiently, grateful for all these blessings. No one, perhaps, has such cause as myself to adopt the psalmist's declaration: 'Surely goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life.' Good night, my dear —. Our friends the Babingtons are staying with us, which leaves me less time for writing even than I have eyesight. I know I shall be much pressed to-morrow, so I have taken up a very bad pen to-night. May God bless you—the constant wish, as in a few minutes it will be the prayer, of

"Your most affectionate father,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

To Lady Olivia B. Sparrow he wrote a few days later :

"MY DEAR FRIEND: Be it known to you, that I have at length determined to withdraw from Parliament. My physician did not absolutely require this, but he would allow me to attend on general days only, etc., and even this permission he accompanied by a declaration that if I should bring on such another attack as I had last spring, I probably could not stand it. Thus I had to balance any little good I might hope to do by this occasional attendance on the House of Commons, where in truth I am not wanted, against the risk of losing all the benefit and comfort my family, and perhaps a wider circle, might derive from my prolonged continuance in private life, and these being the weights in the two scales, could I doubt which preponderated? I know I need not apologize for presuming that you will not be indifferent about any incident that concerns me so deeply. I hope not to be idle in private life, though *less noisy*. I have much more to write than my eyes can get through, but I did not like to use my amanuensis in writing to you. It is worse than shaking hands with a friend with one's gloves on. But I must say farewell. I rejoice (we rejoice) to hear —— is going on so well. So this world passes: one retires, another comes forward. But there will be a world where there will be none of these changes, but in which when once, through the infinite goodness of our God and Saviour admitted, we shall continue forever in happiness and glory. May you and I, my dear Lady O., and all we most love, be of that happy number."

The annunciation of this step was received by his

friends with mingled emotions of rejoicing that he was thus about to adopt measures which would prolong, in all human probability, his sojourn on earth, and regret at the loss which would be sustained by the withdrawal of his influence, which was ever felt in the House of Commons in the promotion of every plan of philanthropy, as well as in its moral tone. As a mere orator, his powers had been impaired by years. Yet these very years, passed, as they had been, in the public observation, yet "without reproach," had given him an influence still more powerful than even that of burning words. Sir Samuel Romilly had once said of him, that he was "the most efficient speaker in the House of Commons;" and Pitt had said repeatedly, "Of all the men I ever knew, Wilberforce has the greatest natural eloquence;" and Mr. Morritt says: "I find that I have recorded my own general opinion of his oratory and parliamentary exertions, in terms which, though intended only to commemorate for my own future reflection the more recent impression they made, I extract from their privacy in my drawer, that you may be more sure of their being my genuine and impartial judgment.

"Wilberforce held a high and conspicuous place in oratory, even at a time when English eloquence rivalled whatever we read of in Athens or in Rome. His voice itself was beautiful; deep, clear, articulate, and flexible. I think his greatest premeditated efforts were made for the Abolition of the Trade in Slaves, and in supporting some of the measures brought forward by Pitt, for the more effectual suppression of revolutionary machinations, but he often rose unprepared in mixed debate, on the impulse of the moment, and seldom sat down without having struck into that higher tone of general reasoning and vivid illustration, which left on his hear-

ers the impression of power beyond what the occasion had called forth. He was of course unequal, and I have often heard him confess that he never rose without embarrassment, and always felt for a while that he was languid and speaking feebly, though he warmed as he went on. I have heard the late Mr. Windham express the same discontent with himself, both probably from the high standard of excellence at which they aimed. I always felt, and have often heard it remarked by others, that in all his speeches, long or short, there was generally at least from five to ten minutes of brilliance, which even the best orator in the House might have envied.

“His own unaffected principles of humility, and his equally sincere estimate of the judgment and good intentions of others, which became in advancing life more and more predominant, influenced both his line of oratory, and his reasoning when not in the House of Commons. He gradually left off the keener weapons of ridicule and sarcasm, however well applied and justly aimed; but with the candor that gave what he thought due weight to an adversary's argument, he sometimes (as it seemed to me) with undue diffidence neglected or hesitated to enforce his own. Sometimes also, as on the questions involving peace or war, the wishes of his heart were at variance with the conclusions of his understanding, and ‘resolutions of great pith and moment’

‘Were sicklied o’er with the pale cast of thought.’

“I have more than once remonstrated with him for giving us in his speech the deliberation which passed in his own mind, instead of the result to which it led him, thus furnishing his opponents with better weapons than

their own arsenal could supply. Of course this led to many an imputation of inconsistency from those who loved him not, which those who knew him not received; but the real difference was between the manly decision of his conduct, and his unfeigned distrust and diffidence of his own opinions."

But though withdrawn from personal action, he by no means laid aside the interest he had always taken in the proceedings of the National Council. Affairs of great moment (Catholic questions) were at the time agitating the House, and he records in his diary his views of the merits of the several speakers, while he writes to Mr. Buxton: "The veteris vestigia flammæ are kindled into a sort of dull heat by the reports of your new debates." Yet, on the very day on which his connection was actually severed by the "motion for a new writ," February 22d, 1825, he records the character of the weather merely: "Foggy in the morning, but it cleared up and became delightful. The sun full out all day. The bees seduced to fly about into the crocus cups. The blackbirds singing."

To two of his sons who had requested him to send them his last frank, he wrote on the same day.

*To Robert Isaac Wilberforce, Esq., and Samuel Wilberforce, Esq., Oriel College, Oxford.*

"MY DEAR BOYS: When Charles the First was on the very point of exchanging, as I trust, a temporal for an eternal crown, he was forced to be short, so he said but one word—and now I have but a moment in which to use my pen, and therefore, my dear boys, I also will adopt his language, and add as he did, REMEMBER.—You can fill up the chasm. I will only

add, that with constant wishes and prayers for your usefulness, comfort, and honor here, and for glory, honor, and immortality for you hereafter, I remain.

“Ever your most affectionate father,

“W. WILBERFORCE.

“I am not clear that this letter will pass free, and therefore make it single.”

One more extract in a higher tone will complete the exhibition of his feelings. After speaking in glowing language of the “full harvest” younger men might live to see, from “the good seed now sowing in this highly-favored land and its dependencies, let me check,” he continues, in a letter to Lady Olivia Sparrow, “this random sally of the imagination; and for you, though much younger than me, as well as for myself, let me recollect that we may humbly hope through the infinite mercies of our God and Saviour, to behold all the joys and glories that I have been anticipating for the generations to come, but to behold them from a higher elevation, and through a purer medium. We are not told that Moses was to experience after death any thing different from mankind in general; and we know that he took part in the events of this lower world, and on the mount of transfiguration talked with Christ concerning His death which He was to undergo at Jerusalem. And I love, my dear friend, to dwell on this idea, that after our departure from the scene of our earthly pilgrimage, we shall witness the development of the plans we may have formed for the benefit of our fellow-creatures; the growth and fruitage of the good principles we have implanted and cultivated in our children; and above all, the fulfillment of the prayers we have poured forth for them, in the large effusions on

them of that heavenly grace, which above all things we have implored as their portion. It is almost, I fear, to touch too tender a string, but there is one within my breast also, which vibrates in exact unison with yours; and may I add, that I can not doubt our own dear children are now taking a tender interest in all that concerns the real happiness of those parents, the value of whose Christian instruction, and prayers, and tears, they are in a situation to estimate more justly, and therefore to feel for them a more lively gratitude, than while they were our fellow-travellers through this transitory world. I must no longer trespass on my slender stock of eyesight, but say, farewell."



## CHAPTER XLIV.

WHEN Mr. Wilberforce quitted Parliament he determined to withdraw from London altogether. His temporary retirement near Uxbridge was exchanged, therefore, for a freehold residence at Highwood Hill, a pleasant spot, just "beyond the disk of the metropolis." "We have bought a house about ten miles north of London," he tells Mr. Gisborne. "I shall be a little Zemindar there; 140 acres of land, cottages of my own, etc."

His feelings when purchasing this place are expressed in his comments on the habits of a friend. "How rational is his mode of life! Domestic charities sweetening and cheering the defilements of worldly affairs. I partake in his longing for repose; and oh! may I be enabled more and more to walk during the years which may yet remain for me in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghost." "Oh! may I only walk with God during my closing years, and then where is of little consequence."

His new purchase was not ready for the reception of his family, and he spent the spring and summer of 1825 in the quiet of his Uxbridge cottage, and rejoiced to find more time than heretofore for miscellaneous reading.

It is interesting to trace in his correspondence the

evidence of the settled continuance of the same principles and modes of action as had given power and character to his earlier years of Christian life. Thus, at this time he writes to one of his sons who was about visiting York, on occasion of a grand musical performance in the Minster: "Never was I more affected by music than even by the common service in the Minster. But I did not think I ought to incur the expense for such a gratification: so many enjoyments and comforts are profusely poured on me, that I may be well satisfied without paying so dear for an additional pleasure, though I own I think music and the taste for it are given to us for the very purpose of exciting devotional feelings; and I always regret that in such performances as the Messiah, the attendant circumstances are so sadly calculated to damp and dissipate those spiritual affections which the music of itself is so fitted to call forth. How beyond measure more I have always thought I should enjoy it if I were in a situation in which I could hear it all without being seen or being obliged to chat, and express my admiration of this song and that chorus. But when music is performed in a Cathedral we should endeavor to compose the mind, to recollect ourselves, and strive to fancy we are listening to the sound

'Symphonious of ten thousand harps that tune  
Angelic harmonies, the empyrean  
Ringing with hallelujahs.'

I was called away yesterday before I had finished my letter, and I have resumed my pen to-day, (Sunday,) and therefore I must make the remainder of my letter suitable to the day. And I know not how I can do it better, than by mentioning to you, what I intended

saying before we parted, but neglected; I mean that, on reflection, I was not satisfied with the general strain of our conversation on the Sunday when we were all together. And as my dear children, to do them justice, are apt to take their tone from me, I fear I have been chiefly in fault. May the Lord forgive me! I am persuaded we should make it a chief part of our Sunday's occupation, to cultivate a spiritual frame of mind, to confirm and strengthen our sense of the reality of invisible things. It is a great acquirement, to be able to realize the unseen world; more especially before we engage in prayer, we should endeavor to feel ourselves in the presence of our God and Saviour. I find my striving to do this especially effectual in producing a sense both of contrition and of awe, and of gratitude and confiding hope. And here let me remark, that I am persuaded, we all sadly wanting to ourselves in not striving more to attain spiritual joy. Oh! we do not live up to our Christian state and privileges. If we examine the Acts of the Apostles, and St. Paul's Epistles, we shall find how much Christian joy is spoken of as naturally belonging to real Christians. My very dear —, do you strive, I beseech you, after this blessed affection, and be assured you may attain it if you duly strive. But my eyes are tired. I must go to prayer, where my dear — will occupy a special place in my heart. Oh! may my dear son be carried safely through the ordeal through which he is now passing, and may he exhibit the life and character, and enjoy the peace and joy of a Christian. I should never have done, if I were to go on till I had exhausted all the affectionate emotions which crowd for expression."

To another of his sons he says: "If you do not possess a copy of Venn's Sermons, I must send them to

you, and recommend them, not for your parishioners' use, but your own. They contain much good sense, and a strain of true piety. He was a man, for whose writings it will, I doubt not, be a strong recommendation to you, that I entertained for the man himself the highest esteem and affection. I hope you are reading *Richmond's Life*. He was an excellent man, and without any superiority of talents or acquirements, was eminently useful. Indeed, the pains he took with his parishioners indicated such a zeal in his Master's cause, as could scarcely fail to impress the hearts of his flock with a sense of the interest he took in their well-being. One summer we were for several months only four miles from Turvey, Richmond's parish—he then habitually met his parishioners four, if not five times in the week. One evening he would read some book and make remarks upon it, for example, the *Pilgrim's Progress*; on another he would pray and sing hymns. I have been at one of these meetings, and have seen a barn, fitted up a little for the purpose, filled with the peasantry in the smock-frocks in which they had been laboring. I forget whether or not you have *Scott's Life*. It is well worth your habitual perusal. \* \* \* My very dear —, I pray daily twice for you, and so I hope you do for me. Oh! prayer, prayer is the great maintainer of spiritual life.

The house at Highwood Hill being not still in a condition for immediate occupancy, he spent the autumn partly in visits to his old friends, and partly at Uxbridge, where he was much visited by them; and his diary contains many interesting records of the delight he experienced in these circumstances, as well as of his estimate of the character of persons already known or about rising above the public horizon. The popular

works of the day, whether treating of politics or other subjects, were read to him, and elicit his expressions of approval or condemnation. Thus after hearing *Edinburgh Review* of Roscoe's *Boccaccio*, he says: "What an occupation for a man of talents in advanced age!" And on another occasion: "Too much time taken, and interest, too, in Walter Scott's *Heart of Mid Lothian*. Yet I only hear it in afternoon and evening. Much the best of his novels that I have heard. Jeanie Deans a truly Christian character, and beautiful as far as it goes. Yet I have been tempted to bestow some eyesight and time upon it which should have been better employed." "Never," says his son, "did he lay down these fascinating volumes without repeating his complaint, 'that they should have so little moral or religious object. They remind me,' he said, 'of a giant spending his strength in cracking nuts. I would rather go to render my account at the last day carrying with me *The Shepherd of Salisbury Plain*, than bearing the load of all those volumes, full as they are of genius.'" It would cumber this volume to make large extracts from his diaries. Some few, as mere indices of the state of his mind, may be thus introduced occasionally:

"'Butterworth breakfasted; full of matter and good works—all activity; God bless him! Dear Simons in full feather, but too wild, and in prayer too familiar. Saw a delightful letter from Bishop Heber—200 native converts, and he never saw meeker Christians, or of more intense and touching piety.'" An ardent love for the Liturgy grew manifestly with his years. He breaks out this winter in a letter to a friend, into a warm expression of his "delight in the principles of our various formularies. Though they are sometimes unconsciously possessed and used, and their nature and qualities often

misconceived, and at times calumniated ; yet in circumstances of depression and desolation their sanative excellence displays itself like some rich unguent that had been frozen and torpid ; they begin to emit their healing fragrance, and to supply an antidote to the poison, that would otherwise consume the vitals."

In December he spent a few days with Mr. Harford, at Blaize Castle ; and here "he slid," says his host, "insensibly into continuous descriptions of parliamentary scenes with which he had been connected.

" 'When Lord Londonderry was in his ordinary mood, he was very tiresome, so slow and heavy, his sentences only half formed, his matter so confined, like what is said of the French army in the Moscow retreat when horse, foot, and carriages of all sorts were huddled together, helter-skelter ; yet when he was thoroughly warmed and excited, he was often very fine, very statesman-like, and seemed to rise quite into another man.

" 'Our general impression of Sheridan was, that he came to the House with his flashes prepared and ready to be let off. He avoided encountering Pitt in unforeseen debating, but when forced to it, usually came off well.

" 'Fox was often truly wonderful. He would begin at full tear, and roll on for hours together without tiring either himself or us.

" 'Pitt talked a great deal among his friends. Fox in general society was quiet and unassuming. Sheridan was a jolly companion, and told good stories, but has been overrated as a wit by Moore.

" 'Fox was truly amiable in private life, and great allowance ought to be made for him : his father was a

profligate politician, and allowed him as much money to gamble with as ever he wished.'

"I asked him if he remembered the miser Elwes, in the House of Commons? 'Perfectly; and that question reminds me of a curious incident which one day befell that strange being. In my younger days we often went to the House in full dress, on nights, for example, when we were any of us going to the opera. Bankes, on an occasion of this kind, was seated next Elwes, who was leaning his head forward just at the moment when Bankes rose hastily to leave his seat, and the hilt of his sword happening to come in contact with the miser's wig, which he had probably picked off some scare-crow, it was unconsciously borne away by Bankes, who walked in his stately way down the House, followed by Elwes, full of anxiety to regain his treasure. The House was in a roar of merriment, and for a moment Bankes looked about him wondering exceedingly what had happened. The explanation was truly amusing, when he became conscious of the sword-hilt which he had acquired.'

- "As we were one day talking of devotional poetry, 'Dr. Johnson,' said he, 'has passed a very sweeping condemnation on it, and has given his opinion, that success in this species of composition is next to impossible. And the reason which he gives for it is, that all poetry implies exaggeration, but the objects of religion are so great in themselves, as to be incapable of augmentation. One would think, however, that religion ought to be the very region of poetry. It relates to subjects which, above all others, agitate the hopes and fears of mankind; it embodies every thing that can melt by its tenderness, or elevate by its sublimity; and it has a natural tendency to call forth in the highest

degree, feelings of gratitude and thankfulness for inestimable mercies. His prejudice, poor man, appears to me to resolve itself into the same cause which prevented his deriving comfort from the cultivation of religion. The view which he took of Christianity acted on his fears, it inspired him with terror, it led him to superstition, but it did not animate his affections, and therefore it neither duly influenced his conduct, nor imparted comfort to his feelings.'

"We were talking of the levity and gayety of heart of the French, even under the severest misfortunes. This drew forth an anecdote, which had been related to him by Mr. Pitt. 'Shortly after the tragical death of Marie Antoinette, M. Perigord, an emigrant of some consequence, who had made Mr. Pitt's acquaintance at Versailles, took refuge in England, and on coming to London, went to pay his respects in Downing Street. The conversation naturally turned upon the bloody scenes of the French Revolution; on their fatal consequences to social order; and in particular on the barbarity with which the unfortunate queen had been treated. The Frenchman's feelings were quite overcome, and he exclaimed amidst violent sobbing: "Ah! Monsieur Pitt, la pauvre Reine! la pauvre Reine!" These words had scarcely been uttered, when he jumped up as if a new idea suddenly possessed him, and looking towards a little dog which came with him, he exclaimed: "Cependant, Monsieur Pitt, il faut vous faire voir mon petit chien danser." Then pulling a small kit out of his pocket, he began dancing about the room to the sound of his little instrument, and calling to the dog, "Fanchon, Fanchon, dansez, dansez," the little animal instantly obeyed, and they cut such capers together that the minister's gravity was quite overcome, and he burst



into a loud laugh, hardly knowing whether he was most amused or astonished.' "

The "love of ease" never tainted his old age. He had entered private life with the remark: "A man need not be idle because he ceases to be loquacious." "Alas!" he complains at the beginning of the next year, "life is stealing away. It ought to shock me to think how all are at work endeavoring to promote the poor slaves' well-being. But all my friends advised retiring. Well, let me at least try to act in the spirit of that verse of this evening's family reading: 'Be ye always abounding in the work of the Lord.' "

He occupied until the spring a house at Beckenham, which had been lent him by a friend, where he enjoyed much of that retirement which he so long had coveted. "Few callers here. I have my time more to myself than I can expect almost anywhere." "May I especially strive against that fatal trifling away part of the closing hour at night. Let me employ an hour in spiritual exercises, prayer, meditation, Scripture reading, and other serious books, as Lives, etc."

Here his rarer intercourse with society was under the same rules as when he moved in the full stream of London life. "Mr. and Mrs. W. came in the evening. How little did I improve the opportunity, though indeed I know not what could be done, but to show civility, and that I had no horns or tail!"

Through the Christmas holidays his family all gathered round him; and with them and visits from his friends in London, his time was fully occupied. His thoughts, too, turned watchfully to the progress of the cause with which his life had been identified; and he was often busy with his pen in guiding the decisions of its chief conductors. "Macaulay giving me useful in-

telligence. We differing about Female Anti-Slavery Associations. Babington with me, grounding it on St. Paul. I own I can not relish the plan. All private exertions for such an object become their character, but for ladies to meet, to publish, to go from house to house stirring up petitions—these appear to me proceedings unsuited to the female character as delineated in Scripture. And though we should limit the interference of our ladies to the cause of justice and humanity, I fear its tendency would be to mix them in all the multiform warfare of political life."

On the 15th of June, he took possession of his house at Highwood Hill, with the characteristic entry—"Late when got home, and had a too hasty prayer for first settlement in a new house—all in confusion." He was now here only for a week, and then went on into Suffolk.

"26th. Dined at Samuel Hoare's at Hampstead, with Dr. and Mrs. Lushington, and William Allen, who still goes on doing good. Miss Joanna Baillie came in the evening—so like the Doctor, as quite to affect me. Dr. Lushington acting a most important part in changing the condition of the colored class through the whole West-Indies, by contending against the oppression exercised towards Leceme and D'Escoffery. Oh! what a glorious thing it is for a man to be a member of a free country! He and Miss Baillie were asked if they believed in a particular Providence. 'Yes,' they replied, 'on great occasions.' As unphilosophical as unscriptural—must not the smallest links be as necessary for maintaining the continuity, as the greatest? Great and little belong to our littleness, but there is no great and little to God."

The manner in which his time was spent may be

gathered from the principles he had always possessed, and the illustrations already given. The evidences of his warm affection for the Established Church of England, and his entire approbation of her doctrine and services, is spread on every page of his diary and manifested in his entire course of life. This did not, however, interfere with the most free and cordial affection for those whose views differed from his own. Thus while at Bath, in the year 1826, he says in his diary: "Saturday. Joseph John Gurney came in the afternoon to stay till Monday. Evening, Butterworth also, and Mr. White, New-Zealand missionary. A most interesting evening. Hearing from White how he and his companions proceeded on their first arrival, and the dangers to which they were exposed—their lives suspended on the vibrating beams of the balance. With Joseph Gurney to the Quaker's meeting. We sat still (they all with their hats on) for about twenty minutes. Then Gurney slowly rose, and prayed for about five minutes an opening prayer. Then he preached, as we should say, for about an hour, (no text,) and for want, perhaps, of divisions, it appeared rambling, and left no deposit, only impression; then after a short pause, he prayed about ten minutes, and after a short pause, notice given that service at six, and neighbors shook hands with each other. Came away thankful that not Quakers. No Scripture reading, no Common Prayer. The *prayer* himself kneels, the rest stand. Afternoon to — Chapel—an excellent, sound sermon." This was probably Mr. Jay's chapel. Before his marriage—soon after his conversion from the mere child of this world to the servant of the Lord Jesus Christ—Mr. W. had formed the acquaintance of Mr. Jay, and this acquaintance had ripened into a warm Christian

friendship which does not appear to have suffered any interruption or abatement during the long period which intervened between that time and this his last visit to Bath. Differing as they did decidedly on the matter of church government, there was yet the higher, holier, closer bond by which they were made one in Christ Jesus, each partaking of His Spirit, which held them in a communion and fellowship more intimate by far than that outward communion which is but the symbol of the true; an union of which they who have once participated, know none more lasting, since it is the commencement of an eternal fellowship; none of deeper sympathy, for it is holy and pure as the source from which it springs; none less liable to interruption, for it is filled with the essential nature of that Love which hopeth all things, believeth all things, endureth all things, and of which the Spirit of Truth hath declared that it never faileth, surviving alike Hope and Faith. Such was the communion of Wilberforce with Gurney and Jay. Differing on points which each thought though not "of the very essence" of religion, yet of the *highest importance*, points which neither could with a good conscience keep out of view, points on which each gloried as a "cause of thankfulness" that he differed from the other, each yet welcomed the other as a brother "in Christ," because each saw in the other the fruits of that Spirit of Christ, without which whosoever liveth is yet dead, and other than which no power can make any one a member of "His body, which is the Church, the fullness of Him who filleth all in all." (Eph. 1: 23.) One of the beautiful results of this true knitting into one body is exhibited in the following letter to Mr. Jay, written twenty years before this period, by Mr. Wilberforce, from Bath, where he

was then sojourning for the benefit of the waters. Mr. Jay had even thus early acquired great celebrity, and had gone to London to preach.

“NEAR BATH, *Sept. 22d, 1803.*

“MY DEAR SIR: I commence my letter with unaffected doubts whether I should apologize for delaying it so long, or for even now writing it. I have for a fortnight past been on the point of taking up my pen, and knowing on the one hand that I am addressing a man of whose candor and liberality of spirit I would rather speak to any other than himself; and on the other, my conscience bearing me witness, that I am actuated by pure benevolence, and love without dissimulation: I will proceed to fulfill the most valuable duty of friendship. Yet, when I go on to state that it is to observe on your mode of preaching that I have resolved to address you, I am aware that I may not without reason, appear guilty of the same presumption as the philosopher who undertook to lecture Hannibal on the art of war; for you must—it can be no compliment to say it—have studied vastly more than myself the way of addressing your hearers, and have balanced opposite considerations, etc., etc., etc. Yet it may be of use to a minister that a friend should tell him what the hearers say, not to control, but to inform his judgment, that having all before him, he may at length decide for himself. I have, then, (to come to the point,) been told from various quarters, that your strain of preaching has been of late not sufficiently evangelical, and though the few opportunities I have myself had of hearing you, (opportunities which I always prize as the greatest of my Bath pleasures,) scarcely qualify me to judge for myself on this question; yet I should not be honest,

were I not to confess that they have rather confirmed the report which has reached me from others. It has been ascribed to your having witnessed the sad consequences of an unwarranted application of the promises and blessings of the Gospel, and I have myself also ascribed it to a cause connected with the former: I mean to your observing that the bulk of professors were shamefully uninstructed in the Christian system, and ignorant of the very Scriptures in which they say that they have eternal life. I hope I need not assure you that no man is more vehement against that way of preaching, which indolence, I fear, more than any other consideration, has rendered so general, of following so little the example of the sacred writers, as to be always insisting on one single topic. I can not want you to leave your fitness, with which your talents and knowledge enable you to honor God and serve man. I can not wish you to give up the various melodies with which a bountiful Creator has endowed you, for the unvaried strain of one cuckoo note, but there is a mode (and no man knows it better) of preaching evangelical truth practically, and applying evangelically the rich and full variety of the doctrines and precepts of the word of God. I am aware, too, that there may be no danger of your being misunderstood by your own stated congregation. But, indeed, my dear sir, you are 'a debtor to the Greeks and Barbarians.' Consider the situation in which you stand. Not another minister in Bath, whom any of the poor, wretched upper classes are likely to hear, who preaches the Gospel. They come perhaps to your chapel; they never heard the word of life before; they never may have another opportunity. Pity them, my dear sir, as I know you

do. They above all others deserve to be pitied. I have, alas! been more conversant with them than you, and am, therefore, the more impressed with a sense of their wretched ignorance in spiritual things. And now, my dear sir, I have only to express my hopes, that you will do justice to the motives of esteem and regard which have dictated this letter, and it may be as well to add, that no human being, not even Mrs. Wilberforce herself, knows of its being written. It appears to me that all friendly offices of this kind are likely to be more pure from all improper mixture, when they are known by the two individuals alone from whom and to whom the representation is made. And besides this motive for secrecy, I must add, that it requires a very different degree of evidence and conviction to warrant the *private* communication of censure to a friend, and the mention of it, if it is to become ever so little public; for if any thing *be at all* divulged, who shall say 'thus far and no farther?' I can not pass this occasion of expressing the sincere pleasure, and I hope I may say improvement, with which I have read the first and a great part of your second volume of Sermons; the publication of which may, I trust, be beneficial in various ways; and I must advise your sending forth an addition to their number.

"I remain, my dear sir,

"Yours very sincerely,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

On the publication of the "Evening Exercises," Mr. Jay dedicated them to his friend, by permission, and the receipt of a copy of the work is thus acknowledged:

"ELMDON HOUSE, NEAR BIRMINGHAM, *Dec. 30th*, 1831.

"MY DEAR SIR: Though I will not withhold from Mrs. Wilberforce the pleasure of answering your friendly letter, I can not be satisfied without assuring you with my own pen, that I feel honored as well as gratified by the proof of your esteem and regard for me, which you gave by desiring to place my name at the head of your publication. It gives me unaffected pleasure to reflect that my name will be thus permanently associated with yours, and may this, my dear sir, with all your other labors of love, be abundantly blessed. May the Gracious Giver of all good, who has already rendered you an instrument of such extensive usefulness, continue to prosper the endeavor to promote the temporal, and still more the eternal benefit of your fellow-creatures; and after a long, protracted sphere of usefulness and honor, may you at length hear addressed to you those blessed words, 'Well done, good and faithful servant,' etc. Suffer me also to add my humble prayer, and let me hope that it will be yours also, that I may one day welcome you into that better world; and that, though by somewhat different paths, yet tending to the same point, and gravitating, if I may use the expression, to the same centre, we may at length meet where holiness, and happiness, where love, and peace, and gratitude, and joy, will be unalloyed and everlasting. Such, my dear sir, is my sincere wish, and sometimes shall be the prayer for you and for all that are dear to you.

"Yours, with cordial esteem and attachment,

"W. W."

Even these sentiments of warm affection and approval are quite consistent with the feelings which dictated an



entry in his diary in the year 1825 : " — at Jay's, where I greatly wished to go, but thought it wrong." The circumstances which brought it into the category of those things which the apostle thought " lawful " but not expedient, are not stated, but in such circumstances the most consistent follower of Christ is often placed.

## CHAPTER XLV.

THE chief feature of 1827, was a progress which he made after an interval of almost twenty years through his native county.

Many of his letters at this time, are colored more or less by the tone of thought excited by the death of Lord Liverpool and Mr. Canning. "Whatever span of life may yet be left to us," he said to Hannah More, "may we both be using our remaining days in preparation for the last. My friends are daily dropping around me. The companions of my youth, then far stronger and more healthy than I was, are worn out, while I still remain." And to Mr. Babington he says: "When you last wrote to me, you were under the influence of a feeling that has of late been often called into exercise with me also; that which is excited by seeing our old friends dropping off one after another while we are left behind.

*'Hæc data poena diu viventibus, ut renovata  
Semper clade domus, multisque in luctibus, inque  
Perpetuo mærore et nigra veste senescant.'*

But how different are the emotions with which we may regard the deaths of our friends from those of the heathen poet! And it is one of the indirect rewards of such religious principles and habits as lead us to select

our friends from the excellent ones of the earth, that we are not compelled to seek for comfort by forgetting the companions of our choice that are taken from us, but may follow them in our thoughts and sympathies into that paradise into which we trust they have been received, and may hope at no distant period to see them once more."

Something too of the same tone, blended touchingly with the liveliest affections, may be traced in a letter to a son on the continent.

"YORK, July 22, Sunday, at Mr. Gray's,  
a true Christian and old friend.

"MY VERY DEAR — : It fills my heart with thankfulness, to be assured that my dear children are on this day withdrawn from worldly occupations. I fancy to myself, my dear, my very dear —, (for dear at home becomes very dear abroad,) calling up before his mind's eye the images of absent friends, and I am encouraged by a better feeling than vanity, to cherish the hope that your old father has a place among them. Even were it a common day, (a week-day as it is termed,) writing to you at such a distance, when the thought that perhaps even at the very time in which I am addressing you, you may be no more, the thoughts and feelings of my heart would naturally be of a serious color; and when in relation to all my friends, present or absent, my mind on this day is conversant with their highest interests, it must be peculiarly so in communicating with a very dear child who is perhaps a thousand miles off, and of whom I have not heard for several weeks. Whilst thinking of your geographical track, if I may so term it, I am led to the idea of your spiritual track—your *track home*, as it is phrased on the globes in the line

that describes the voyages of our great circumnavigators. My mind has been the rather drawn to this reflection by yesterday's having been the birth-day of our beloved and, I confidently hope, sainted Barbara—already joined by our sweet little grandchild. There is something very affecting to my mind in this way of considering life, as a voyage in which 'track out' and 'track home' designate its opposite periods of youth and old age. Oh! what cause have I for gratitude in the blessed influences of the Divine Spirit which has directed your course, and kept you from the rocks on which many, alas! make shipwreck! And He will still I trust, watch over, and guide, and guard you even unto the end; and if it be consistent with the Divine will may I be spared to see you engaged in that most dignified of all services, that of superintending the best interests of your fellow-creatures, and guiding and guarding them through this dangerous world to the haven of everlasting happiness and peace, to the rest that remaineth for the people of God. May God bless you. I am ever

"Your most affectionate father,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

He closed his Yorkshire visits by one to his old political antagonist, Lord Fitz William at Wentworth House, which is worthy of notice. In a letter to Mr. Stephen, written there, he says: "Lord F. might well have been forgiven, if he had conceived an unconquerable antipathy to me. When I was first elected county member, it was in defiance of his old hereditary interest—I a mere boy, (but twenty-four,) without a single acquaintance in the county, and not allowing him the recommendation even of one

member, though with Sir George Savile's family connection and name superadded to the family interest, and then I must have appeared to him identified with Mr. Pitt, against whom, not altogether without cause, he had conceived a deadly hostility, even imputing to him (though this was not merely different from the truth, but opposite to it) that Pitt had from the first disliked him. Yet in spite of all repelling principles, so strongly has worked the general kindliness of his nature, that he, the old gentleman, (gentleman I may truly term him, for a finer gentleman can not be conceived,) has behaved to us with an unaffected, unassuming friendliness, that at times has brought tears into my eyes. It has really brought powerfully to my feelings that better state in which all misconstructions shall be done away, and all truly good men will love one another."

On his return to Highwood, he says: "It is so long since I was here, that I really feel a stranger in my own house. I have had little leisure lately for reading, or rather for hearing, my life has been spent in chattering, and I feel strangely awkward in returning to my ordinary duties. My spirits quite sink at the idea of being here when my boys leave me. Oh! how I long for a quiet lodging anywhere, where I might live as a collegian, having every thing found for me, and I only trying to do a little good with what poor powers are left me, and to work out my own salvation! Oh! let me not distrust that mercy of God which has never failed me. I want to allot a day to devotional exercises."

"These," say his sons, "were not his habitual feelings; they were the diapason tones of a mind of infinite compass; but for the most part his latter years were emi-

nently bright and cheerful. Never indeed was he more evidently happy than in that calm old age on which he entered with the elasticity of youth, and the simplicity of childhood. Gay, busy, social, and affable, tender without softness, and witty without sting, he was still the delight of old and young; and whether he was joining in the 'animated talk amongst the young hands,' or discoursing with his remaining equals, it was in the busiest and happiest groups that he was always to be found. His days at Highwood were very regularly spent. He rose soon after seven, spent the first hour and a half in his closet; then dressed, hearing his reader for three quarters of an hour, and by half-past nine met his household for family worship; always a great thing in his esteem. At this he read a portion of the Scriptures, generally of the New Testament, in course, and explained and enforced it, often with a natural and glowing eloquence, always with affectionate earnestness, and an extraordinary knowledge of God's word."

"After family prayers, which occupied about half an hour, he never failed to sally forth for a few minutes

'To take the air and hear the thrushes sing.'

He enjoyed this stroll exceedingly. 'A delightful morning. Walked out and saw the most abundant dew-drops sparkling in the sunbeams on the gazon. How it calls forth the devotional feelings in the morning when the mind is vacant from worldly business, to see all nature pour forth, as it were, its song of praise to the great Creator and Preserver of all things! I love to repeat Psalms 104, 103, 145, etc., at such a season.'"

"His habits had long since been formed to a late hour

of breakfast. During his public life his early hours alone were undisturbed, and he still thought that meeting late tended to prolong in others the time of morning prayer and meditation. Breakfast was still prolonged and animated by his unwearied powers of conversation, and when congenial friends were gathered round him, their discussions lasted sometimes till noon. From the breakfast-room he went till post time to his study, where he was commonly employed long about his letters. If they were finished, he turned to some other business, never enduring to be idle all the day. 'H. is a man,' he says after a wholly interrupted morning, "for whom I feel unfeigned esteem and regard, but it quite molests me to talk for a whole morning. Nothing done, and no accession of intellect.' Soon after his retirement he was invited as an idle man to an amateur concert. 'What!' he exclaimed, 'music in a morning! Why, it would be as bad as dram-drinking.' Yet his love for music was as strong as ever. This very year he speaks of himself as 'quite overpowered by the Hallelujah Chorus in the Messiah, a flood of tears ensued, and the impression on my mind remained through the day." But a long-continued conscientious use of time had stamped its value deeply on his mind. He was planning in this leisure season some further employment of his pen; a work on the Epistles of St. Paul, especially. 'I have read Whately's Essays on Scripture Difficulties. That on St. Paul's Epistles exactly my own thoughts twenty years ago, and often about to be published.' Weak health and his infirmity of sight still defeated his intention, and neither this work nor an additional chapter to that on Christianity, in which he wished to address the old, were ever actually completed for the press."

"About three o'clock, when the post was gone, he sallied forth into the garden, humming often to himself, in the gladness of his heart, some favorite tune, alone, or in the company of some few friends, or with his reader. Here he would pace up and down some sheltered sunny walk, rejoicing especially in one which had been formed for him by a son, and was called ever after, with some hint of affection, by his name."

"The picture which the dead leave on the minds of their survivors," says Mr. Gurney, "is not always lively or distinct. Although we may have fondly loved them, and may hallow the memory of their good qualities, we can not always summon their image before us; but I venture to express my conviction, that no one who has been accustomed to observe Wilberforce, will ever find the slightest difficulty in picturing him on the tablet of the mind. Who that knew him, can fail to recall the rapid movements of his somewhat diminutive form, the illumination of his expressive countenance, and the nimble finger with which he used to seize on every little object which happened to adorn or diversify his path? Much less can we forget his vivacious wit—so playful, yet so harmless; the glow of his affections; the urbanity of his manners; and the wondrous celerity with which he was ever wont to turn from one bright thought to another. Above all, however, his friends will never cease to remember that peculiar sunshine which he threw over a company by the influence of a mind perpetually tuned to love and praise. I am ready to think there could be no greater luxury than that of roaming with him in solitude over green fields and gardens, and drawing out of his treasury things new and old."

"This was most true of his hour of daily exercise. Who that ever joined him in it can not see him as he



walked round his garden at Highwood? Now in animated and even playful conversation, and then drawing from his copious pockets (to contain Dalrymple's State Papers was their standard measure) some favorite volume or other; a Psalter, a Horace, a Shakspeare, or Cowper, and reading, and reciting, or 'refreshing' passages; and then catching at long-stored flower-leaves as the wind blew them from the pages, or standing before a favorite gum cistus to repair the loss. Then he would point out the harmony of the tints, the beauty of the pencilling, the perfection of the coloring, and run up all into those ascriptions of praise to the Almighty which were ever welling forth from his grateful heart. He loved flowers with all the simple delight of childhood. He would hover from bed to bed over his favorites; and when he came in, even from his shortest walk, deposited a few that he had gathered, safely in his room before he joined the breakfast-table. Often would he say, as he enjoyed their fragrance: 'How good is God to us! What should we think of a friend who had furnished us with a magnificent house and all we needed, and then coming in to see that all had been provided according to his wishes, should be hurt to find that no scents had been placed in the rooms? Yet so has God dealt with us. Surely flowers are the smiles of His goodness.'

"He staid out till near dinner, which was never after five, and early in the evening lay down for an hour and a half. He would then rise for a new term of existence, and sparkle through a long evening to the astonishment of those who expected, at his time of life, to see his mind and spirits flag, even if his strength was not exhausted. The whole evening was seldom spent in conversation, for he had commonly some book in 'family

reading' which was a text for multiplied digressions full of incident and illustration. His own hand has drawn a picture of these rational and happy evenings."

"I did not put down my pen," he concludes a letter, after annexing as the date, "Friday night, forty minutes after eleven," "till the announcement of dinner rendered it necessary. After dinner I lay down, and through the kind care of my friends was suffered to sleep, as too commonly it happens, for an hour and three quarters. I then came down, and after a little business heard the young Macaulays read passages from one of those numerous *Annals* which the wealth and animation of the present day supplies for interesting the faculties without labor or effort. We went to prayers, and after about half an hour, surely well spent, we returned to the common room and renewed our reading, which I just now stopped, finding how late it was, and being in the singularly favored circumstances of an old fellow, who is allowed to say, 'Come, or go, do this or do that,' without the appearance of fretfulness. Then — by saying, 'Surely you will not think of finishing your letter at so late an hour,' reminded me that it was still on the stocks, and was to be launched into the post stream to-morrow morning. I owe, however, so much respect to her reasonable remonstrances, as to endeavor to abridge all that I might have added if I had taken up my pen in more favorable circumstances.

"One word of what we have been reading—an article in one of the *Annals* on Gibbon and Madame de Staël, and latterly also on Voltaire. You remember, I doubt not, the last sentence in Gibbon's *Autobiography*; I have engaged my young friend to write under it Dr. Watts's beautiful hymn, ending with the line: 'Fore-

tells a bright rising again.' This is one of the 'Hymns for Children,' but surely it is for the children of God, for the heirs of glory; and when you compare it either in point of good sense, or imagination, or sterling value, or sustaining hope, with the considerations and objects which feed the fancy, or exercise the understanding or affections, of the most celebrated men who have engaged the attention or called forth the eulogiums of the literati of the last century, you are irresistibly forced to exclaim in the spirit of my grand favorite :

'O happy Hymnist! O unhappy bard!'

"Farewell, my dear ——.

"Ever affectionately yours,

"W. WILBERFORCE."

"As the evening wore away, his thoughts took commonly this color. After prayers, as he walked up and down the room, he would have read to him missionary accounts, and journals of what was done by foreign Christians. This was his usual Sunday evening reading. 'It is the most deeply interesting of all subjects, to observe how the contest is going on between light and darkness, what different spots of this rebellious province are being brought into subjection to their rightful Sovereign.' "

"His love of books was still extreme. Though he could read little continuously, he would pick out the pith of most works by a rapid glancing through the pages, and in every house he visited, he knew commonly within two days the full amount of its literary stores. His great complaint against his feeble eyesight was that it prevented his maintaining an accurate acquaintance with the great writers of antiquity. There

were few modern works which he did not either thus run through, or have read to him, except 'mere novels;' and his short criticisms show how little the acuteness of his mind was blunted. 'Reading Lawrie Todd, but disliked and left it off—a stupidly told story—attempt at delineations of character very indifferently executed—no touches of nature or marked discriminations. Hearing Hallam's Constitutional History of England in Quarterly. Southey a bitter critic, and works him with great acuteness and force.' 'Hearing Lord Orford's Memoirs of George the Second's reign—very bitter, and prejudices great, yet accounts curious.' 'Scott's novels useful as the works of a master in general nature, and illustrative of the realities of past life. Looked at Pelham—most flippant, wicked, unfeeling delineations of life—to read such scenes without being shocked, must be injurious. I am sorry — read it. For very shame I would not have it read to me.' 'We finished Sir Jonah Barrington's Autobiography. A true picture of a thorough man of the world, who professing to believe in Christianity, shows throughout his whole life not one single reference in thought or feeling, word or deed, to any Scriptural principle or precept. On the other hand, Scripture says: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all to the glory of God."'

In such occupations as these, he would go on till very late; for from long use in Parliament, "the midnight hour was his zenith, and like the beautiful cereus with all her petals expanded, he was then in full bloom."\*

"This was especially the case when old and valued friends had gathered round him. Old age had scarcely lessened his relish for society, but it had drawn still closer the bonds of his affection for his early friends. 'As I

\* Mr. Gurney's sketch.

grow older,' he told Mr. Gisborne, 'I find myself growing more attached to such of the companions of my youth as are still left to me; and they are, I need not say, still more valued, when they are such as we may humbly hope we shall meet again in a better world.' 'When I was a younger man I was tempted to make intellectual conversation my all in all; but now I can truly say, that I prefer the society of the simplest person who fears God, to the best company of a contrary kind.' This happy preference was the result of early watchfulness. After receiving a 'very clever and entertaining man' many years before, 'I must record the truth,' he says, 'I seldom have found myself more unspiritual, more indisposed to prayer, than after my party had left me. I could not some how raise my mind to heavenly objects, alas! and so it has been partly this morning also. Is it that the society of an able worldly man is hereby indicated to be unsafe to me? I had a sort of struggle about inviting him, as if intimating the wish to be acquainted with an irreligious man, was showing too great a deference for talent. Is it as a punishment that I have since felt so cold and wandering in my mind? I would not be nervous and superstitious, but I ought to watch and keep my heart with all diligence. Oh! let me deal honestly with myself. Let me give up, however entertaining, even however instructive, whatever it seems the intimation of God that I should relinquish. O Lord! cause me to be so full of love, and zeal, and grateful loyalty, and child-like affection for my Saviour, that I may love them that love Thee; and may I thus become more in my tempers and frames of mind an inhabitant of heaven.'"

In great measure had this prayer been answered. "Do invite — to come and see you," was the request

this year of some of his family, naming one of the first men of the age for intellectual powers. He made no answer at the moment, but said afterwards in private: "I am sorry not to do what you wish, but so false and hollow as I think the man, I could have no comfort in his company. Only think what truth is; it is the very principle of gravitation in the moral world." Yet there was nothing of austerity about him. The playfulness of his good-tempered humor would often gild even serious remarks.

It is not a little interesting to trace the impression he now made on those who staid with him at Highwood. "I remember," says the present Bishop of Calcutta, "his walking with me up and down his drawing-room some time beyond midnight; his figure is now in my mind, his benevolent eye, his kind, considerate manner of speaking, his reverence for Scripture, his address, the pauses he made in his walk when he had any thing emphatic to say. I recollect one sentiment was, that the passages so frequent in Scripture, importing the unwillingness of the Almighty that the sinner should perish, the invitations addressed to him to return, the remonstrances with him on his unbelief, etc., must be interpreted strictly and literally, or they would appear to be a mockery of man's misery, and to involve the most fearful imputations on the Divine character. Evasions of the force of such passages were, he thought, highly injurious, and went to sap the whole evidence and bearing of the Christian revelation.

"He had a delicate, yet penetrating and microscopic insight into character. Observations minute, accurate, graphical, and often with a tinge of humor, dropped from him in conversation, and when quiet in his family he would imitate the voice and manner of the person

he was describing (generally some public man) in a way to provoke profuse merriment. Then he would check himself and throw in some kind remark. His charity, indeed, in judging of others, is a trait in his Christian character, which forces itself on my recollection. Of his benevolence I need not speak; but his kind construction of doubtful actions, his charitable language towards those from whom he most widely differed, his thorough forgetfulness of little affronts, were fruits of that general benevolence which continually appeared. The nearer you observed him the more the habit of his mind appeared obviously to be modest and lowly. He was in as little measure as possible elated by the love and esteem of almost the whole civilized world, which long before his death had been fixed upon him. It required some management to draw him out in conversation, and therefore some of those who saw him only once, might go away disappointed. But if he was lighted up, and in a small circle, where he was entirely at his ease, his powers of conversation were prodigious; a natural eloquence was poured out, strokes of gentle playfulness and satire fell on all sides, and the company were soon absorbed in admiration. It commonly took only one visit to gain over the most prejudiced stranger."

The following letter is an instance of this kind. Its writer came to Highwood Hill prejudiced against him by some who had maligned his character. After spending two days at the house, she wrote to a sister.

"HIGHWOOD HILL, *April 12, 1828.*

"You would hardly believe, my dear sister, that I find it much more difficult to write from this quiet country place, than from London. Yet I have thought of you more than ever, and how have I wished for you

here, where there is so much that would interest and charm you! It is now past twelve, yet I am sitting up to finish what I began this morning; in no one moment before have I been able to do so, and I write after such a fatiguing day, that I feel as if all my powers of expressing myself were gone. Indeed, I think I have been in a delirium all the time that I have staid here, from the excitement of being happier than for a long time past. Yet my happiness can not be complained of, as it has consisted so much in watching the admirable conduct and feelings, and listening to the excellent conversation, which appears to bring religion more near to the heart, and the heart more near to God.

"I can perfectly believe that those who have not seen Mr. Wilberforce in his own house, among his own family, and who have heard all the stories that have been told of him, may not give credit to the sincerity and purity of his intentions, but no one could see him as I have done, without being charmed. I wish I could send you something of what I have heard in the beautifully simple explanations that he gives every day of a chapter that he reads from the Testament. Then if you could hear him reading, as he does, the poems in the 'Christian Year!' I shall have much to tell you at some future time, of sentiments and ideas of his, all so beautiful, and so true, and so indulgent, for I think nothing more striking in him than that spirit of general benevolence which governs all that he says; joined to the extreme beauty of his voice, it does indeed make him appear 'to love whatever he speaks of.' Then he seems so thoroughly pleased to hear any anecdote in praise of any person who is talked about, and so ready to make allowance in others for the faults that he has not a taint of himself. Oh! he is a dear, good, admi-



rable old man! I have been praying that I may be enabled to imitate whatever is imitable in this excellent being; his talents and attractions are not to be acquired, but is it not a cheering reflection that such principles as his may be gained by all?"

His sons say: "One occupation of his time at Highwood is too characteristic to be omitted. Assistance to young men of promise had always been with him a favorite charity, and the inclination had been strengthened by the evident harvest he had sometimes reaped. To have been one of the first who assisted Kirke White would have been reward enough; but he had seen two others, who owed all to him, fill with credit different judicial stations; and at this very time the highest honors of one of our Universities were obtained by two young men, for whose education he had in like manner assisted to provide. But now that he had time, he gave more than merely money; he made his house the home of one or two youths, the expense of whose education he defrayed; all their holidays were spent with him; and hours of his own time were profusely given to training and furnishing their minds. Nor were the poor forgotten; they were invited to join in his family worship on the Sunday evening, and sought out often in their cottages for instruction and relief."

When he first came to look at Highwood, he was "most struck by its distance from church—three miles;" and it was only on hearing that "a new chapel was probable;" that he entered on the purchase. At the end of three years the hope of a chapel seemed further off than ever: he resolved therefore to avail himself of the new Church Building Acts, and erect one on Highwood Hill, if he could obtain the sanction of the Commissioners.

But this good work was not to be completed without opposition and contention, in the midst of which he eminently manifested in private, as he had long done in public life, the meekness of true Christian wisdom under calumny and falsehood.

This most Christian undertaking involved him in cares and anxieties, subjected him to calumnies, and drew him into controversies which embittered the remainder of his life, and it was not until a few days after his death, that the chapel which he erected, at an expense of £4000, was opened for the worship of Almighty God.

The opposition of the incumbent of the parish was pressed in every way in which it could be made annoying to him, even to the extent of preaching against him publicly, and writing him "a very rough and malignant letter, substantially charging him with falsehood and mercenary motives." "Poor fellow, I think I can truly say," is his entry in his diary, "that I regret it chiefly on his own account. Yet I would not deceive myself. My insensibility may arise chiefly from habit. During forty-five years used to false charges, etc., and it would be strange if I now regarded them. Blessed be God, I am sure I have meant well; and the only fear I have had is lest I should have spent too much thought in so good a cause. Expounded this evening on second lesson, 1 Cor. 7. 'The time is short.' 'It remaineth,' etc. 'The fashion of this world passeth away.'" It would be impossible, without entering into details which would be incomprehensible and devoid of interest to a large proportion of readers who can not be supposed familiar with the peculiar condition of English law on this subject, to convey an idea of the extent of the embarrassment with which this noble enterprise was obstructed. After charging Mr. W. with hy-

pocrisy, lying, and mercenary motives, and resorting to every available means to obstruct the building of the chapel; owing to some error in the action of the attorney of Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Williams, the incumbent of the parish in which it was built, claimed and acted upon the right of presentation to the chapel, the erection of which he had endeavored to frustrate, and was able to appoint a minister of his own views; thus defeating the purpose of Mr. W., who had derived pleasure from "a consideration on which my mind settles with great comfort, that long after I am dead and gone, some good man or other will be endeavoring to bring perishing souls to the great Physician;" and again: "The effects of the attention which I hope any occupant of the intended chapel will pay to the education of the children of the neighborhood weighs powerfully with me."

Whilst this annoying business was in progress, his faith in God was proved by another trial. Though his style of living had always been below his income, he had never accumulated money. He had retrenched his expenses to give and not to save; and he had given largely and constantly. "You probably know," was an incidental testimony to his unseen charity, from a distant relation soon after his decease, "that it was very much owing to him that I was enabled during a very long period of years to live in an independent manner; and his tenderness and feeling in conferring obligations was such that they raised, not mortified, the objects of them. Whenever I alluded to the subject his usual reply was to this effect: 'Had our circumstances been changed, you would have acted towards me as I have done towards you.' To two others of my family his

liberality laid the foundation of present usefulness, and I trust of future blessedness."

"I never intended to do more," he told his eldest son, "than not exceed my income, Providence having placed me in a situation, in which my charities of various kinds were necessarily large. But believe me there is a special blessing on being liberal to the poor, and on the family of those who have been so; and I doubt not my children will fare better even in this world, for real happiness, than if I had been saving £20,000 or £30,000 of what has been given away."

He now felt therefore some inconvenience from "reducing his rents, which were never high, full thirty-seven per cent," at a time when his family were most expensive to him. His property had been further lessened by his raising a considerable capital in order to embark his eldest son, whose health appeared unequal to the practice of the law, in a large farming speculation, "to be actually managed" as he thought "by —," a man in whose principles and practical acquaintance with the business, he at that time entertained the highest confidence. The event did not confirm his expectations; and in the very month when Mr. Williams's pamphlet, charging him with fraud and hypocrisy, appeared, he found that, to secure the remainder of his fortune, he must submit to the immediate and very heavy loss of nearly all the capital which had been invested in the business, and retrench greatly on his usual style of living. Yet he was still as free from care as ever. Amongst many gratifying instances of his unbroken cheerfulness, an interesting sample may be found in his renewed intercourse with Sir James Mackintosh, whom he now met frequently during a visit he made at this time at Battersea Rise. "Mackin-

tosh came in," he says, "and sat most kindly chatting with me during my dinner—what a paragon of a companion he is; quite unequalled!" "We are spending a little time at this to me deeply interesting place. I always visit the funeral urn—H. T. Jan. 16th, 1815—M. T. Oct. 12th, 1815. Sir James Mackintosh and his family now live in one of the houses which are built upon the ground which Henry (Thornton) sold on the side opposite to that of C. Grant's house. He has been sitting chattering to the girls and myself for above an hour; and this extraordinary man spends, they tell me, much of his time in the circulating library room, at the end of the Common, and chats with the utmost freedom to all the passengers in the Clapham stage as he goes and comes from London. It is really to be regretted that he should thus throw away time so valuable. But he is at every body's service, and his conversation is always rich and sparkling."

Mackintosh's own account of this intercourse is peculiarly happy. "Do you remember Madame de Maintenon's exclamation: 'Oh! the misery of having to amuse an old King, qui n'est pas amusable!' Now if I were called upon to describe Wilberforce in one word, I should say he was the most 'amusable' man I ever met with in my life. Instead of having to think what subjects will interest him, it is perfectly impossible to hit on one that does not. I never saw any one who touched life at so many points; and this is the more remarkable in a man who is supposed to live absorbed in the contemplation of a future state. When he was in the House of Commons, he seemed to have the freshest mind of any man there. There was all the charm of youth about him. And he is quite as remarkable in

this bright evening of his days as when I saw him in his glory many years ago."

"His mind," says another and more serious observer,\* "was of a highly discursive character; and it was often extremely amusing to observe how, while pursuing any particular subject, he was caught by some bright idea which flashed across his path, and carried him off (for a time at least) in a wholly different direction. This peculiarity belonged to his genius, and was a means of multiplying the instruction which his conversation afforded. But the volubility of his intellect was balanced by the stability and faithfulness of his moral qualities. When the happiness of man and the glory of God were in his view, he was forever recurring to his point, and in spite of all his episodes of thought, was an assiduous, persevering, and undaunted laborer."

And such he still continued, when any great cause woke up his former fires. "Retired as he was from public life," says Mr. Gurney, "and greatly enfeebled in his health, he no longer found his place in the van of the army, or in the heat of the battle; but both by speaking and writing he repeatedly bore his public testimony in favor of the great principles of the Abolitionists; and his warm encouragements and wise counsels were always ready to stimulate and direct the efforts of his friends."

\* Joseph John Gurney.

## CHAPTER XLVI.

BUT the sketch of this vigorous and cheerful mind would be exceedingly imperfect, if no hint were given of the hidden springs by which its freshness was maintained. A merely cheerful age is a melancholy sight to thoughtful men. "It quite lowers my spirits," was his own declaration at the conclusion of a visit, "to see people past seventy, so little apparently estranging themselves from worldly objects; it is most painful to me not to be able to converse with them on religion." His own cheerfulness rested on a surer basis. He was often thoughtfully retracing all "the way by which the Lord his God had led him." "How striking is the change of fifty years—then Samuel Smith and I travelled as bachelors, and now he has a house full of descendants; and I also have five children and a grandchild living, besides a daughter and sweet little grandson gone, I humbly trust, to a better world. Praise the Lord, O my soul! My dear, and I trust imparadised, child's birthday."

This same tone of thought may be traced in his letters to those with whom he was most intimate. "It is one of my frequent subjects of gratitude and praise, though not as frequently as it ought to be, that in the kind providence of God I was born an Englishman. Go through the whole earth and enumerate every part of it, and you will find nothing like our own country.

An Englishman too in this period of our country's existence, and in the middle station of life, etc., etc., etc. We do not, I am sure *I* do not, live sufficiently under the constant influence of this spirit of thankfulness; and I believe there is not any one, who has at all observed the dealings of Providence in his own instance with any thing like a due measure of attention, who will not have seen many, many particulars in which he has been deeply indebted to the preventing or directing grace of God. It was the reproach, and among the chief causes of the condemnation of the pagan world, scanty as was the light they enjoyed compared with the brightness of our meridian day, that they 'were not thankful.' And still more the people of God were threatened with being cast off if they should not serve the Lord their God with joyfulness and with gladness of heart for the abundance of all things. How much more then should our hearts overflow with continual gratitude! I doubt not the want of this blessed disposition will constitute one of the leading articles in the condemnation of the unholy; and I have found rustics, as unassailable as a tortoise in every other quarter, feeling their weak and indefensible state in this point, when I have put it to themselves whether they have been in any due degree grateful to the God who gave them all their present blessings, and who gave His only Son to die for them, and to the Saviour, who for their sakes endured the unknown agonies of His bitter passion and cruel death."

To his daughter he writes, marked (Private):

"HIGHWOOD HILL, *July 15, 1830.*

"MY DEAR —: I was compelled to make up in extreme haste, and to finish full as rapidly, the letter to



you which is just dispatched to the post-office, and I recollected, when it was too late to supply the defect, that there was not in my epistle a single word of a serious, or rather of a religious character. Now, though I do not carry my principle in this respect so far as some good people have done, thinking it wrong that any letter, under any circumstances, should be sent off without containing some religious sentiments, yet at my time of life, almost a year beyond that stated by the psalmist to be the ordinary limit of the life of man, and more especially when a daughter is addressed, I do think there should be some recognition of those influential principles which ought ever to be uppermost in a Christian's bosom. And if from any one the constant exhibition of religious principles and feelings might be expected, assuredly from me, in whose heart, there may well be expected, a continual breathing forth of adoring gratitude to my God and Saviour, for all the long course of goodness and mercy by which my life has been distinguished. I have often thought that if I had been imbued with the notions described in Mrs. Grant's letters from the Highlands, (notions which represent the Deity as being jealous of the happiness of his creatures,) I should certainly have supposed, that I must prepare for some signal misfortune, to counter-balance all the accumulated blessings which have been poured on me in such rich and increasing profusion. But oh! how much more generous as well as just are the views of the character of the Supreme Being, our Heavenly Father, which we derive from the word of God! 'God is love.' Even under a dispensation which, when compared with that of the Gospel, may be deemed to wear somewhat of a harsh and repulsive countenance, the Jews were told, that the laws prescribed to

them were devised for their good : but under our more generous and gracious system judgment and punishment are termed the strange work of God : and mercy, and long-suffering, and bounty, and loving-kindness are His habitual disposition toward us. Even when speaking to sinners, (there is scarcely any passage in the Bible which has afforded me so much comfort,) the language is : 'The Lord takes pleasure in them that fear Him, *in them that hope in his mercy.*' Only consider the force of that assurance, and the comfort it must give to any who may be apprehensive of being presumptuous in indulging hopes of pardon. They are assured, not that they may presume to hope that their sins may be forgiven, but that by so hoping they will display the very disposition of mind in which God takes pleasure. Believe me to be ever your very affectionate Father,

W. WILBERFORCE."

In a letter to Lord Teignmouth he says : "What importance does it give to life when it is regarded in its true character as the probation in which are to become *constitutional* the dispositions which must form our meetness for the heavenly state ! When the real purpose and grand end of life is compared with the low view taken of it by the votaries of ambition, or even of literature and science, the contrast between the joys of children, and the researches and pursuits of manhood, is a most feeble and inadequate illustration."

"The main fault of the present day," he now repeatedly declared, "is the making knowledge and intellectual advancement the great object of pursuit, instead of that moral improvement by which we may be fitted for a higher and better state. Much mystery over-

hangs the one, and time with an oblivious touch effaces the little we do attain of science; but blessed is he who attains some lineaments of the moral image of God, for they shall see Him as He is, and then shall know even as they now are known." This conviction made him still watchful to redeem the time. "This evening," he says, Feb. 15th, "I expounded on the Epistle, 'So run that ye may obtain, etc., lest I should be a cast-away.' The second lesson this very evening is 1 Cor. 2, in which St. Paul relates his labor and sufferings. And could pains be required by Him? Oh! then, my soul, strive—to him that overcometh only, the promise is assured." "My future state should now be my grand, indeed, comparatively speaking, my sole concern. God's kind providence has granted to me a residue of life after its business is over. I know I must be near death, perhaps very near it. I believe that on the state in which death finds me, will depend my eternal condition; and even though my state may now be such as to produce an humble hope that I am safe, yet by a wise improvement of my time, I may augment my eternal happiness, besides enjoying delightful communion with God in the interval. Let me then make the improvement of my soul the first grand business of my life, attending also to the good of others, if possible both by my pen, and conversation, and social intercourse."

In this spirit he continued still his rules of abstinence and self-denial, saying on Ash Wednesday, "We attend too little to these days;" and often secretly observing his fasting regulations—"disused pleasant food—Daniel. Entire fasting does not suit my constitution, but I attend to the principle." Often also did he now give up his days to more continuous devotion, employing thus

especially his own and his children's birth-days, and noting in his diary. "I had an interview of two hours and a quarter before dinner of unspeakable value. Why not secure many similar seasons? At my time of life what so proper or so likely to make me useful to others as thus walking with God?" It was not in vain that he thus watched and labored. Through these later years he walked, in an eminent degree, with God, and was literally kept in perfect peace through every trial. Those who lived with him and marked his unmixed cheerfulness could scarcely believe that he felt as much on relinquishing his house at Highwood, as a letter written at the time implies.

"HIGHWOOD, *March 18.*

"MY DEAR —: I wished that you should receive from myself rather than from the tongue of rumor, tidings which sooner or later were sure to be conveyed to you, and which I know would give you pain. The loss incurred has been so heavy as to compel me to descend from my present level, and greatly to diminish my establishment. But I am bound to recognise in this dispensation the gracious mitigation of the severity of the stroke. It was not suffered to take place till all my children were educated, and nearly all of them placed out in one way or another; and by the delay, Mrs. Wilberforce and I are supplied with a delightful asylum under the roofs of two of our own children. And what better could we desire? A kind Providence has enabled me with truth to adopt the declaration of David, that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days. And now, when the cup presented to me has some bitter ingredients, yet surely no draught can be deemed distasteful which comes from such a hand, and

contains such grateful infusions as these of social intercourse and the sweet endearments of filial gratitude and affection. What I shall most miss will be my books and my garden, though I own I do feel a little the not (for I know not how long if ever) being able to ask my friends to take a dinner or a bed with me, under my own roof. And as even the great apostle did not think the 'having no certain dwelling place,' associated with his other far greater sufferings, unworthy of mention, so I may feel this also to be some, though I grant not a great evil, to one who has so many kind friends who will be happy to receive him."

His sure confidence was still in God. "He will not suffer me to be disgraced in my old age. What gives me repose in all things, is the thought of their being His appointment. I doubt not that the same God who has in mercy ordered so many events for so long a course of time, will never fail to overrule all things both for my family and myself." And on recovering from a temporary illness, "I can scarce understand," he said, "why my life is spared so long, except it be to show that a man can be as happy without a fortune as with one."

It should be mentioned to the credit of our times, that by no less than six persons, one of them a West-Indian, such private offers were now made to Mr. Wilberforce as would have at once restored his fortune. It was from no false pride that he declined entirely these friendly propositions, thinking it became his Christian character rather to adapt his habits to his present income. Towards his chapel at Mill Hill alone he consented to receive the assistance of his friends; and no less happy in receiving than in showing kind-

ness, he carried always in his pocket and delighted to produce a well-worn list of their several contributions.

His leaving Highwood was soon followed by a trial of a different nature, the death of his surviving daughter. "Blessed be God," he says, during her illness, "we have every reason to be thankful for the state of mind we witness in her: a holy, calm, humble reliance on her Saviour, enables her to enter the dark valley with Christian hope, leaning as it were on her Redeemer's arm, and supported and cheered by the blessed promises of His gospel. We are in the hands of our heavenly Father, and I am sure no one has hitherto had such reason as myself to say that goodness and mercy have followed me all my days."

"I was much impressed yesterday with the similarity in some respects of my own situation, to that of her dear little innocent who was undergoing the operation of vaccination. The infant gave up its little arm to the operator without suspicion or fear. But when it felt the puncture, which must have been sharp, no words can express the astonishment and grief that followed. I could not have thought the mouth could have been distended so widely as it continued till the nurse's soothing restored her usual calmness, (for it is really true, that I never knew an infant that cried near so seldom as this little one.)"

Now was seen the fruit of the high degree in which he had learned to "walk by faith rather than by sight." "I have often heard," he says, "that sailors on a voyage will drink 'friends astern' till they are half-way over, then 'friends ahead.' With me it has been 'friends ahead' this long time." It was not by the slow process of reasoning, that he learned to regard this as a short separation; he at once felt that they should not long be

parted. And he soon describes himself, "as enjoying as much peace and social comfort, as any ought to expect in this stormy world."

"I forget whether I sent you any particulars of the closing scene," he writes to Mr. Babington. "They were such as to call forth from our dear friend Sargent declarations of satisfaction and thankfulness, which will be sources of comfort and joy to Mrs. Wilberforce and myself as long as we live. The Monday after she was taken away we removed to St. Boniface, which we had taken in the hope of its conducing to her recovery. It is certainly one of the most delightful of all possible retirements. The most romantic scenery sheltered from every cold wind, and abounding in the most delightful walks, both sea and inland. There the Sargents; my S. and his wife, and little toddler and prattler; my H. and ourselves, passed a delightful fortnight. Really, it was an oasis in the wilderness."

## CHAPTER XLVII.

WHEN Mr. Wilberforce gave up his own establishment, he intended to divide the year between the houses of his second and third sons. The latter already had a home fit for his reception in the Isle of Wight; and the former soon possessed one in the neighborhood of Maidstone. "You will join me I am sure," he tells more than one amongst his friends, "in being thankful as well as rejoicing in my being able to inform you that Lord Brougham has given to my second son (or rather I may say to me) quite spontaneously and very handsomely, the living of East-Farleigh. The parsonage is very little above a mile distant from Barham Court, and there must be many pleasant circumstances in being so near the residence, library, park, etc., of an old friend, of such dimensions. This event comes in such a way as strongly to confirm the persuasion that it is an indication of the favor of God; and I can not but recognize a providential hand in Lord Brougham's being prompted to make the appointment just when we were in want of such a settlement and residence; though Lord Brougham knew nothing of the matter, and was quite unconsciously the instrument of granting us our wish."

Here and in the Isle of Wight, to the great joy of those he visited, his remaining years were spent. "Personal reasons," say his sons, "forbid the veil being lifted from



his life as heretofore, and all the feelings shown with which his warm heart overflowed, now that he had become the parishioner and guest of his sons. But a few extracts from his diary and letters will give the outline of his holy and peaceful age.

“‘We have now been here,’ he writes from one of his parsonage houses, ‘for about six weeks. How can I but rejoice rather than lament at a pecuniary loss, which has produced such a result as that of bringing us to dwell under the roofs of our dear children, and witness their enjoyment of a large share of domestic comforts, and their conscientious discharge of the duties of the most important of all professions.’

“‘We are passing our time here very agreeably; indeed we might well use a much stronger term; for we should be void of all feeling if the warmest emotions of gratitude were not called forth in us, towards the gracious Ordainer of all things, for granting us, in the evening of life, after the tossings of the ocean of this world, such a quiet and comfortable haven. Here too we have the delightful spectacle of those whom we love most, enjoying a large measure of human life’s sweetest enjoyments, combined with the diligent discharge of its most important duties. And then that lovely baby! What a manifest benevolence there is in the Almighty’s having rendered young children so eminently attractive, considering the degree in which their very existence must depend on the disposition of those around them, to bear with their little infirmities, sustain their weakness, and supply their wants. How little could I expect to complete my seventy-second year! Yet it is on this day completed, and I am suffering no pain, and my complaints those which are salutary without producing great bodily suffering, like the kind suggestions

of a friend tenderly watching over me, and endeavoring to obtain for me the benefits, without my feeling the evils commonly attendant on providential visitations. Really, the loss of fortune has been delayed till it brings with it some positive comforts, without producing inconvenience or vexation; my children's education having been completed, and my parliamentary life quite finished. The necessity too of quitting my own house has not taken place till I am supplied with a choice of residences; quite an embarras des richesses in the habitation line. Oh! pray for me, my dear —, that my return of gratitude and service may be more commensurate with the rich stock of blessings which the Almighty has poured out upon me.' ”

His overflowing gratitude to God was the chief feature of his later years. Every thing became with him a cause for thanksgiving. When some of the infirmities of years began to press upon him, “what thanks do I owe to God,” was his reflection, “that my declining strength appears likely not to be attended with painful diseases; but rather to lessen gradually and by moderate degrees! How good a friend God is to me! When I have any complaint it is always so mitigated and softened as to give me scarcely any pain. Praise the Lord, O my soul! I have had a feverish night, or rather a dreamy and disturbed one, but no headache or pain, D. G. What thanks do I owe to my gracious and heavenly Father!”

The details of his life at his parsonage residences were much what they had been of late at Highwood, except that greater quietness gave him more time for reading, and for those habits of devotional retirement which manifestly grew with his increasing years; in which he found the Psalms and St. Paul's Epistles be-

coming more and more dear to him. He was still read to whilst he dressed; and after thus hearing Sharon Turner's *Sacred History*, he notes in his pocket-book the importance of "meditating more on God as the Creator and Governor of the universe. Eighty millions of fixed stars, each as large at least as our sun. Combine the considerations hence arising with the madness and guilt of sin as setting up our will against that of God. Combine with it Christ's unspeakable mercy and love, and that of God in Christ."

This subject he had been accustomed to notice in his family exhortations. "The discoveries of astronomy," he said, "instead of having an opposite effect, warm my heart. I think of eighty millions of stars in our nebula, and of two thousand nebulae, and I feel elevated and thankful to bear part in this magnificent creation, to be the child of Him who is the Governor of these boundless dominions." These thoughts often passed into meditations upon the moral attributes of God. "Retire into thy closet," is one of the last entries in his pocket-book, "and there let contemplation indulge her flights and expatiate." "I find unspeakable pleasure," he tells a friend, "in the declarations so often reiterated in the word of God of the unvarying truth of the Supreme Being. To me there is something inexpressibly sublime in the assurance, that throughout the whole immeasurable extent of the all but infinite empire of God truth always extends, and like a master-key unlocks and opens all the mysterious wisdom, and goodness, and mercy of the Divine dispensations."

His early walk, and his mid-day employments remained unaltered; and in the afternoon he still took as heretofore, considerable exercise; pacing at East-Farleigh,

during the winter, up and down a "sheltered, sunny, gravel walk;" and in the summer, climbing with delight at Brighthelm to the top of the chalk downs, or of an intermediate terrace, or walking along upon the unfrequented shore.

His evenings were as bright as ever, and though his power of retaining new impressions was greatly impaired, the colors of his earlier recollections seemed scarcely to fade.

His conversation was enriched by many anecdotes of the times in which he had lived, and the distinguished persons with whom he had been familiar; but it was when it turned upon higher topics, and gave occasion to the exercise of holier feelings, that it was especially important. His contentment with the divine dispensations and calm acknowledgment of the wisdom of the ways of Providence was uniform. Once when the condition of a sick neighbor was mentioned, he exclaimed: "Poor soul! how little we know of the afflictions of those in other ranks of life! I am quite abashed to think of them. I have to find sorrows for myself: God has so crowded His mercies upon me, I can fancy how delightful it would be to pour on oil and wine into her wounds. How wonderful is the power with which all the statements of Scripture come home to the different circumstances of life! In how many instances, for example, does that parable of the good Samaritan direct us how to be truly pitiful." And soon after, speaking of Herschel's saying, "There are things which must be forever hid from man," he broke out: "No, that they shall not. I shall know all these things. Oh! how low at best are all your wise men and philosophers. Truly he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he!" He then began to speak of the astonishing

truths of the Gospel. "Only think of that one declaration: 'God is perfect truth and perfect love.' Why, that one thought worked out is enough to fit a man for heaven. Oh! the goodness of God to me, to bear all my provocations of Him for so many years, and then not only to hear my prayers, but to give me grace to offer them!" Here he stopped, quite overpowered by his feelings.

Low as was his estimate of all that he had actually done, it was easy to see, by the judgments which he formed of others, how much he now rejoiced in his earlier choice of objects and pursuits. "Much struck to-day," says his diary, "with T. as the successful lawyer at his best. How little has he been (I fear) preparing for another world! His father was an artisan; what will it signify in a little time whether he had remained on that level or risen as he has?" "Thank God," was his common exclamation after parting with those who had drawn prizes in the lottery of worldly scenes; "thank God that I was led into a different path." "How much rather," he said to one of his sons as he drove by the splendid house of one whom he had always thought rapacious—"how much rather would I be living as I am on the wreck of my fortune, than have fattened as he has done upon the public."

Never did any one see in him the least touch of regret for that which he had given up. "When a man chooses the rewards of virtue," he said with some little indignation, after hearing such complaints, "he should remember, that to resign the pleasures of vice is part of his bargain."

But that which was of all things most worthy of remark in his review of his past life, was his unfeigned

humility. To himself he appeared "a sadly unprofitable servant," and needed constantly "the soothing consideration that we serve a gracious Master, who will take the will for the deed. Thou *didst* well (even the phraseology is indicative) that it was in thy heart." Any direct allusion to his services was met by some natural disclaimer, "that we each knew our own faults," and that he was deeply conscious of "neglected opportunities of service;" just as a friendly preface to his work on Christianity drew from him the remark: "Such things ought never to be published till a man is dead."

He had always detested flattery. Mr. Gisborne never saw in him so much display of temper as when, being addressed with servility by a person who wished for his favorable influence with Mr. Pitt, he threw the letter on the ground, with the exclamation: "How much rather would I have the man spit in my face!" This beautiful simplicity survived all the unfavorable influences of his life; and the old man whose name was a familiar word in every mouth, whose country parsonage was visited almost like a shrine, and who was told by Rammohun Roy, that when "he left the East, one of his chief wishes was to see Mr. Wilberforce," was still altogether lowly in his own sight, and could say with natural simplicity, when treated in a place of public concourse with some marks of courtesy: "How very civil they were to me; they made way for me, and treated me as if I were some great man!"

Almost the only growing mark of age was a still increasing love of that rest to which he was drawing nearer. "The grasshopper had become a burden to him," and he declined to settle a dispute which had been referred to him, with the excuse: "My spirits are

now quite unequal to these unpleasant contentions." With the same feeling he replied, when pressed to take a part in an election contest: "I have retired and must be silent and neutral." When he looked out into the world from his retirement, it was in the faithful spirit of one who, though not unacquainted with its storms, was more deeply learned in the secret of a quiet confidence in God. "I have felt my mind and spirits less affected than perhaps they ought to have been by the various clouds that are now gathering around us with such appalling blackness. Yet I trust that I may calmly, though humbly, resign myself to the gracious disposal of that great Being, who, I am sure, has mercifully poured out on me such unnumbered blessings, and so allayed with mitigating kindness the few trials to which I have been subjected, as to give me cause to look up to Him and address Him as my heavenly Father. For my own part, I quite rejoice in being out of all the bustle and turmoil of political life."

He now never met a friend of earlier days, whose principles were different from his own, (and such he took great pains to see,) without following up their intercourse with a long and friendly letter on their most important interests, pressing mainly on them, that it was not yet too late for them to make the better choice. "This is what they need," he repeated often; "they get to think that they are in for it, and that though they have chosen ill it is too late to alter. I well remember going to my old friend Lord —— in his last illness. I had spoken to him fully on religious matters many years before, and he had seemed to pay no attention to me. I heard that he was taken ill, and called upon him. When I had sat some time chatting with him, but without alluding to religious matters, another

friend came in and asked: 'How are you to-day?' 'Why,' was his reply, 'as well as I can be with Wilberforce sitting there, and telling me that I am going to hell.' The conversation which had thus sunk into his mind had been affectionate and open. "I never can believe," he had said, "some parts of the Scripture." "How can you expect," was the reply, "to be able to believe, when you only turn your mind to the difficulties of the subject?" But what had made his friend read this language in his looks, was very much that sense of hopelessness which he was most desirous to correct. "At all events," said another at the close of such a conversation, "if you are right it is now too late for me to alter. I am in for it." "No," he answered earnestly, "my dear P., it is not too late, only attend to these things and you will find it true, 'him that cometh unto Me I will in no wise cast out.'"

To such calls as these he was still alive, but from all common business he withdrew as much as possible; and could not "leave the quiet of his country retirement even for the most friendly asylum, without his spirits failing him," and praying, "that in proportion as" he "grew unfit for the bustle of life," he "might become more and more harmonized with the sentiments and dispositions of a better world." His need of its waters still carried him to Bath, and he paid a few short visits to his oldest and most valued friends.

Though he had two years before "resolved never more to speak in public," he was induced, upon the 12th of April, 1833, to propose at a meeting in the town of Maidstone, a petition against slavery. His own signature was put to this petition, and with all his earlier spirit, he would not allow the appointment of delegates, a measure commonly adopted, but inconsistent he main-



tained with the spirit of the constitution. It was an affecting sight to see the old man who had been so long the champion of this cause come forth once more from his retirement, and with an unquenched spirit, though with a weakened voice and failing body, maintain for the last time the cause of truth and justice.

There was now no question about immediate emancipation ; but the principle of compensation was disputed, and on this judgment and his voice were clear. Ten years before he had proposed to Mr. Canning that a fund should be formed for indemnifying those who should be proved in fact to suffer by a change in the West-Indian system ; but to admit the principle of previous compensation for expected injury was only to postpone forever all improvements of the system. Against this therefore he all along contended, even whilst he maintained that Great Britain "owed smart money" for her former encouragement of the Slave Trade. He hailed therefore with joy the proposal to atone for these offenses by the grant of twenty millions ; and in this his last speech at once declared : "I say, and say honestly and fearlessly, that the same Being who commands us to love mercy, says also, Do justice, and therefore I have no objection to grant the colonists the relief that may be due to them for any real injuries, which they may ultimately prove themselves to have sustained. But it must be after an impartial investigation of the merits of each case by a fair and competent tribunal. I have no objection either, to make every possible sacrifice which may be necessary to secure the complete accomplishment of the object which we have in view ; but let not the inquiry into this matter be made a plea for perpetuating wrongs for which no pecuniary offers can compensate."

His sons say : "To the very end this his earliest object, aroused all the energies of his mind, and when it was casually mentioned at dinner that 'at this moment probably, the debate on slavery is just commencing,' he sprung from his chair and with the feeling of the old war-horse at the sound of the charge, startled his surrounding friends by suddenly exclaiming, as he might have done of old on the floor of the House, Hear, hear, hear !

"And now the time was come, when his dust was to return to the earth, and his spirit to God who gave it. On the 20th of April he left East-Farleigh, and after a short visit to the Isle of Wight, arrived at Bath on the 17th of May. The waters, to which in great measure he owed the prolongation of his life till his 74th year, would help, it was hoped, to throw off the effects of the influenza, from which he had suffered greatly. But here his strength visibly declined, and it was soon seen, that if his life was spared, it would be but for a season of weakness and suffering. During two months which he spent there, he suffered much from pain and languor ; and though he displayed the most unvarying patience, yet the excellent bust executed at this time by Joseph, shows, beautiful as it is, that his outward tenement was fast hastening to decay. But while all around him were full of thought about himself, his own anxiety was altogether for two of his daughters-in-law : for, a month only before his removal, two grandsons were born to inherit the name of William Wilberforce,

*'Et quasi cursores vitæ lampada tradunt.'*

This event is the last recorded in a pocket-book which he always carried with him. Other of his thoughts

may be traced in its pages, by a set of references to the 'closing scene of several memorable men.'

"All his thoughts and conversation now savored of the better world to which he was drawing near. At this time he was consulted by a young friend who was doubtful what profession to choose, but inclined towards the army or navy. 'Think particularly,' he said, 'whether you are choosing for time only, or for eternity. For of course a sensible man will wish to choose that which will be best on the long run. And then it is just as much part of the consideration what will be best for me between my thousandth and two thousandth year as between my twentieth and thirtieth. It is curious how our estimate of time is altered by its being removed to a distance. Ask how long did Moses live before Christ. If a man says 1300 years, and you correct him, 1500: poh! why be so accurate? Within 200 years will do. But how immense 200 years *now* seem!'"

"Meanwhile the calmness with which he was preparing to close his own career is apparent from the following letter.

*To the Right Hon. Lord Calthorpe.*

(Private.)

"BATH, June 27, 1833.

"MY DEAR CALTHORPE: You have been very kindly liberal about franks, and I really feel your kindness, and did not mean you should be called on so largely. To confess the truth to you, as really, and not merely in name, a friend, I will state that three or four days ago I thought I was breaking up rapidly as well as seriously. There has been I think an amendment subsequently, which leads me to believe that my decline is proceeding

less rapidly than I had supposed, though not less seriously. There has been a general disposition in the system to the deposition of water, and this sluggishness of the absorbents is a very common mode in which they whose constitutions are rather feeble, and who are favored with a gradual exit, actually decay. I thought you would like to know this, and therefore would not keep it from you.

"I hear with real pleasure that your dear sister is well, and that dear Lady Charlotte is about to afford another security against the extinction of the Calthorpe name. My dear friend, may God bless and prosper you, especially in the most important particulars. Oh! what cause for thankfulness have you for having been called to the knowledge and feeling of salvation through the Redeemer! May you grow in grace more and more. Give my affectionate remembrances to Lady Charlotte, and Frederick, also to Miss Calthorpe when you next write, and be assured I am

"Ever sincerely and affectionately yours,

"W. WILBERFORCE.

"The cover I inclose is to spare the finances of a widow with six or seven children, and a very slender pecuniary provision. It is to introduce her to some acquaintances at the place where she has fixed for a time."

His sons remark: "It had always been his feeling that the most fitting state for the last hours of life was one free alike from excitement and from terror; in which while the mind was conscious of the awful nature of the approaching change, it could yet resign itself to its reconciled, all-merciful Father, with the humility as well as the

confidence of a child. He often mentioned it as a proof of great wisdom, that while the younger believer is described by Bunyan in his *Pilgrim's Progress* as passing easily through the stream of death, a less buoyant hope and a deeper flood is represented as the portion of the aged Christian. "It is the peculiarity," he said, "of the Christian religion, that humility and holiness increase in equal proportions."

But his own mind was as remarkable for its thankfulness and peace as for its humility. His youngest son, who was with him at this period, recorded at the moment various memoranda of his state of feeling. "Saturday, July 6th, he was taken ill, quite suddenly, while sitting at dinner. I ran for a medical man, and before I returned he was got to bed. He was suffering much from giddiness and sickness, but his words to me were: 'I have been thinking of the great mercy of God in trying me with illness of this kind, which, though very distressing, is scarcely to be called pain, rather than with severe suffering, which my bodily constitution could hardly bear.' When his medical attendant came, 'Thank God,' he said, 'I am not losing my faculties.' 'Yes, but you could not easily go through a problem in arithmetic or geometry.' 'I think I could go through the Asses' Bridge,' he replied. 'Let me see;' and began, correcting himself if he omitted any thing. Of course his attendant stopped him.

"About eight o'clock, on being asked how he felt, he said: 'What cause have I for thankfulness! I have been all day almost as comfortable as if I had been pretty well. I have slept a good deal, and I have so many people who are kind to me. I am sure I feel deeply my servants' attention.'

"Alluding to a remedy which was provided for some

present discomfort, he burst out repeatedly into exclamations on the goodness of God in these little things, providing means to remedy the various inconveniences of sickness. To this subject he several times recurred, with the remark: 'How ungrateful men are in not seeing the hand of God in all their comforts! I am sure it greatly adds to our enjoyment to trace His hand in them.'

"Soon after, he said: 'What is that text, "He hath hid pride from man?"' I was thinking how God had taught him the folly of pride, because the most beautiful and delicate woman, and the proudest man, of the highest birth and station, who was never approached but with deference and formality, is exposed to exactly the same infirmities of this body of our humiliation that I am.' He was repeating mentally the 51st Psalm, and asked me to look what came next after the eleventh verse. 'Take not Thy Holy Spirit from me.' I read: 'Oh! give me the comfort of Thy help again.' It is very odd, I thought it had been: 'Restore unto me the joy of Thy salvation.' Do look what it is in the Bible Version.' I found it as he said. 'What a very remarkable passage! It seems like an anticipation of the privileges of the new dispensation.'

"He spoke much of the delight which he had in the affection and care of his wife and children. 'Think what I should have done had I been left; as one hears of people quarrelling and separating. "In sickness and in health," was the burden, and well has it been kept.' (Here she came in.) 'I was just praising you.'

"Generally, I should say, that except in his remark about pride, there was hardly a word he uttered that was not a bursting forth of praise. 'What cause it is

for thankfulness,' he exclaimed, 'that I never suffer from headache!'

"Half-past eight, Sunday morning. 'Remember, my dear H.,' he said, 'that it is Sunday morning, and all our times here are very short. I am sure the manner of my dismissal, as far as it has yet gone, has been most gracious. I have not had so much time here for reading Scripture as I wish, but I rejoice at having laid in a knowledge of it when I was stronger. I hope you always take care of that. From our familiarity with it, we do not feel about the Scripture at all as we should do, if we were to hear for the first time that there was a communication from God to man.

"'Think of our Saviour coming down from heaven, and, when one feels what a *little* pain is, submitting to all that He endured; having the nails roughly driven through His hands. To be sure the thought of our Saviour's sufferings is so amazing, so astonishing, I am quite overwhelmed. Next to the horrible driving of the nails, I have thought most of His being given over to the insults of the Roman soldiery, when one thinks what brutal fellows they were. His sufferings were not alleviated as mine are, by the kindness of those about Him.

"'I have been thinking of that delightful text, which has often comforted me, "Be careful for nothing," etc.' (He went on as far as 'The peace of God shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.') 'To be sure,' (he spoke with his voice faltering with emotion,) 'it is the same Almighty power which enables Him to watch over all the world, every creature, beast, bird, or insect, and to attend to all the concerns of every individual.'

"Four o'clock. Dinner time. 'I am a poor creature

to-day,' he said. 'I can not help thinking if some of the people who saw me swaggering away on the hustings at York could see me now, how much they would think me changed. What a mercy to think that these things do not come by chance, but are the arrangements of Infinite Wisdom !

" 'When I think how many poor people are suffering, without the luxuries that I possess, and the kind friends I have about me, I am quite ashamed of my comforts.'

" Five o'clock. 'I can not help thinking there was some mistake about my medicine ; but it does not matter. There is nothing sinful in it.'

" Toussaint Louverture was mentioned in the evening. 'I sent word,' he said, 'to Sir Walter Scott that he had not at all done justice to that part of his History, (of Bonaparte,) and he replied, that if I would point any thing out to him, he would willingly alter it. I wanted dear Stephen to do it, but he did not. I am very sorry for it, but it must be known sooner or later. To be sure to make a treaty of amity and friendship with a man, and then have him and his family seized and sent on shipboard, and finally to the chateau of Joux. . . . And then a veil is drawn over it. None knows what happened. What a story there will be there, when this world shall give up its dead ! It was something like the case of the Duc D'Enghien, but worse.'

" Eleven P.M. 'I feel more comfortable than I have done for I know not how long. Never had a man such cause for thankfulness as I have, and above all, that I have so many, many kind friends to do every thing for me. My own son, and my own wife. I am quite ashamed of my comforts, when I think of Him who had not where to lay His head.'



"Tuesday, four o'clock. Reading some of Cecil's remarks. 'Nothing can be more apposite, than that spirit of the present day, which shows itself for instance in the pride of literature, to the spirit of Christianity. Compare this bold, independent, daring spirit, with the beautitudes. "Blessed are the poor in spirit. Blessed are they that mourn. Blessed are the meek." Nothing surely can be so contrary to what ought to be the spirit of a creature who feels in himself the seeds of corruption.

" "Mrs. Hannah More told me that towards the end of Johnson's life, if he was asked how he was, he would answer, "Rather better, I thank my God, through Jesus Christ." And so to whatever he was asked.' "

A friend who happened to be passing through Bath, two days afterwards, (July 11th,) paid him a visit which he thus describes: "When I arrived at the house on the South Parade which he then occupied, I found that he had been suffering severely from a bilious attack; and his lady, whose attentions to him were most tender and unremitting, appeared to be in low spirits on his account. Still there then appeared no reason to apprehend the near approach of death.

"I was introduced to an apartment up-stairs, where I found the veteran Christian reclining on a sofa, with his feet wrapped in flannel; and his countenance bespeaking increased age since I had last seen him, as well as much delicacy. He received me with the warmest marks of affection, and seemed to be delighted by the unexpected arrival of an old friend. I had scarcely taken my seat beside him before . . . it seemed given me to remind him of the words of the psalmist: 'Although ye have lien among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver, and her feathers

with yellow gold ;' and I freely spoke to him of the good and glorious things, which, as I believed, assuredly awaited him in the kingdom of rest and peace. In the mean time the illuminated expression of his furrowed countenance, with his clasped and uplifted hands, were indicative of profound devotion and holy joy.

"Soon afterwards he unfolded his own experience to me in a highly interesting manner. He told me that the text on which he was then most prone to dwell, and from which he was deriving peculiar comfort, was a passage in the Epistle to the Philippians : 'Be careful for nothing, but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God ; and the peace of God which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ.' While his frail nature was shaking, and his mortal tabernacle seemed ready to be dissolved, this 'peace of God' was his blessed and abundant portion.

"The mention of this text immediately called forth one of his bright ideas, and led to a display, as in days of old, of his peculiar versatility of mind. 'How admirable,' said he, 'are the harmony and variety of St. Paul's smaller Epistles ! You might well have given an argument upon it in your little work on evidence. The Epistle to the Galatians contains a noble exhibition of doctrine. That to the Colossians is a union of doctrine and precept, showing their mutual connection and dependence ; that to the Ephesians is seraphic ; that to the Philippians is all love.'\*

" 'With regard to myself,' he added, 'I have nothing

\* Familiar Sketch, by Joseph John Gurney. His son has recorded the last remark as, "The Epistle to the Philippians is social and domestic."

whatsoever to urge, but the poor Publican's plea: "God be merciful to me a sinner." These words were expressed with peculiar feeling and emphasis, and have since called to my remembrance his own definition of the word mercy—"kindness to those that deserve punishment." What a lesson may we derive from such an example! It may awfully remind us of the apostle's question—"If the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the sinner and ungodly appear?"

The predominance of these feelings may be seen in a remark which he made to his son a few days afterwards, speaking of his dangerous attack the week before: "You must all join with me," he said, "in praying that the short remainder of my life may be spent in gaining that spirituality of mind which will fit me for heaven. And there I hope to meet all of you."

After he had spent two months at Bath, it was thought advisable that he should consult Dr. Chambers, from whose skill he had derived great benefit in 1824. He set out, therefore, towards London, though with no expectation on his own part, of recovering. "There is no one now," he said, "that I can be useful to, but we should always be trying to follow, in every respect, God's indicated will." His purpose was to spend a few days at a house which was lent him by his cousin, Mrs. Lucy Smith, of whose kindness he readily availed himself, observing, that it was his "test of having a regard for a person when he liked to receive favors from them. One likes to confer them upon every one, but only to receive them from real friends. I am sure I used always to think, as soon as I went out of my house, which of my friends there was to whom I could lend it. It was such a pleasure to think, when I could not enjoy it myself, that they did." He commenced his journey

on the 17th of July, and on the 19th arrived in Cadogan Place, Sloane Street.

Thus was he again carried along the road, which forty-five years before he had traversed in apparently a dying state, and his mind seemed to travel back through the long space which had intervened. "How differently time appears," he said to his son while they halted at an inn, "when you look at it in the life of an individual, and in the general mass! Now I seem to have gone through such a number of various scenes, and such a lapse of time, and yet when you come to compare it with any great period of time—fifty years—think how little fifty years seems! why, it is 3000 years since the Psalms, which I delight in, were written. By the way, (turning to his servant,) I have not my Psalter this morning. Do you know where it is?"

The day after he reached town, he expressed himself as "very anxious to dedicate the short remainder of time God might yet allow him, to the cultivation of union with Christ, and to the acquiring more of His Spirit. My private prayers," he said, "are much the same as those in the family, pardon and grace. To-night [Saturday] particularly with regard to the week past."

"Perhaps I have been wrong in not praying more with others. But I never felt that I could open my heart with perfect freedom and sincerity, and the idea of doing otherwise in praying to Almighty God! . . . Now I own many good men use expressions which I can not use; for instance, about their own corruption. I HOPE no man on earth has a stronger sense of sinfulness and unworthiness before God than I. But they speak as if they did not feel the wish to do the will of God, and I am sure I can not say that. Now S., in his

prayers, often uses expressions of that kind, which quite amaze me in a man so sincere as he is."

When he reached London, Parliament was still sitting, and many of his friends flocked around him. "What cause it is for thankfulness," he said, "that God has always disposed people to treat me so kindly, and with such attention! Popularity is certainly a dangerous thing;" [then after a pause;] "the antidote is chiefly in the feeling one has; how very differently they would regard me, if they knew me really!" A friend who at this time came in, asked: "Well! how are you?" "I am like a clock which has almost run down." On the Monday after his arrival, he received a visit from a party of children. After they were gone, he said: "What a delightful thing it is to think how many inhabitants are being trained up there for heaven! For when the means of grace are used, one does see, I think, that God so very greatly, one may say universally, blesses them."

His public conduct had not prevented him from keeping up a friendly connection with many West-Indians, who gave full credit to his sincerity. One of his last visitors was a member of a great West-Indian family; and to his son's remark that this circumstance produced no effect upon his feelings—"Oh! when we really believe a man to be serving God," he answered, "I delight in trampling on all these little points. Some one said, 'I trample on impossibilities.' I do not quite say that; but all these little distinctions are overwhelmed, annihilated, in the case of a person with whom I trust, (speaking with deep seriousness,) for my own sake, I may meet hereafter."

"How thankful should I be," was his remark to a friend who now came in, "that I am not lying in severe

pain, as so many are! Certainly, not to be able to move about is a great privation to me; but then I have so many comforts, and above all such kind friends—and to that you contribute.”

“At this time,” says another member of his family, “I arrived in London to see him, and was much struck by the signs of his approaching end. His usual activity was totally suspended by a painful local disorder, which prevented him from walking. The morning of Friday (July 26th) was pleasant, and I assisted before his breakfast to carry him in a chair to the steps in front of the house, that he might enjoy the air for a few moments. Here he presented a most striking appearance, looking forth with calm delight upon trees and grass, the freshness and vigor of which contrasted with his own decay. It was nearly his last view of God’s works in this their lower manifestation. ‘The doors’ were soon to ‘be shut in the streets, and those that look out of the windows to be darkened.’

“His manner at this time was more than usually affectionate, and he received with great cheerfulness the visits of many old associates, from whom he had long been separated. The last words which I heard from him related to one of these, whose religious opinions he had for many years lamented. ‘How truly amiable he is, yet I can never see him without the deepest pain!’ On Friday afternoon I left him with the intention of preparing to receive him, (at his own residence,) on the following Tuesday, not knowing that before that time he was to be a ‘partaker of the inheritance of the saints in light.’”

It was altogether a striking combination of circumstances that he should have come to London at that time—to die. The Bill for the Abolition of Slavery

was read for the second time in the House of Commons on the Friday night, and the last public information he received was, that his country was willing to redeem itself from the national disgrace at any sacrifice. "Thank God," said he, "that I should have lived to witness a day in which England is willing to give twenty millions sterling for the Abolition of Slavery." His state of health had latterly induced many of his friends to express their hope that he might be allowed to witness the consummation of the fifty years' struggle, and might then retire in peace; and so strong was this presentiment, that one of them speaks of writing to take leave of him so soon as the Bill for the Abolition of Slavery was known to be in progress. That this anticipation should be so exactly realized, added signal interest to an event, which in the course of nature might be shortly expected.

Not less remarkable was it that London, which of late he had seldom visited, and where he purposed to remain but a day or two, should be the place of his departure. Yet had it been otherwise, his funeral could hardly have presented the circumstances, which made it the fit termination of such a life. The concurrence of two such incidents seemed providentially designed to fix public attention on his closing scene, that so the aged Christian might be marked out by the public voice, as the man whom his country "delighted to honor."

On the evening of Friday, however, he seemed so much better, that there was every reason to suppose he would be able to leave town on the Tuesday. His youngest son has again recorded some of his remarks. "A review in the Quarterly was read to him, (Rush's Residence,) which spoke of the Duke of Wellington's

ability in council. 'Most true,' he said. 'I suppose you have never seen them, but when the Duke of Wellington commanded in Spain, and his brother the Marquis Wellesley was sent to conduct the negotiation, the papers containing the dispatches of the two brothers were printed by Parliament, and I remember thinking, that I had never seen any thing at all equal to them in talent. I remember hearing too, that of all the persons who gave evidence about Finance, the Duke of Wellington and Lord Harrowby knew most of the subject.'

"Some of his concluding remarks this evening were on the number of friends by whom he was surrounded: 'I do declare,' he said, 'that the delight I have in feeling that there are a few people whose hearts are really attached to me, is the very highest I have in this world. And as far as the present state is concerned, what more could any man wish at the close of life, than to be attended by his own children, and his own wife, and all treating him with such uniform kindness and affection?'"

His son concludes his notes this evening. "On the whole, what appears to me characteristic in his state of mind is chiefly this: there seems to be little anticipation, though he is strongly impressed with a feeling that he is near his end; much nearer than from what his physician says I trust is the case. He speaks very little as if looking forward to future happiness; but he seems more like a person in the actual enjoyment of heaven within: he hardly speaks of any one subject except to express his sense of thankfulness, and what cause he feels for gratitude. This is the case even in speaking of the things which try him most. Thus, talking of his being kept from exercise: 'What cause



for thankfulness have I that I am not lying in pain, and in a suffering posture, as so many people are! Certainly it is a great privation to me from my habits not to be able to walk about, and to lie still so much as I do, but then how many there are who are lying in severe pain! And then he will break out into some passionate expression of thankfulness."

"The next morning his amendment seemed to continue. To an old servant who drew him out in a wheel-chair, he talked with more than usual animation, and the fervency with which he offered up the family prayer was particularly noticed. But in the evening his weakness returned in a most distressing manner, and the next day he experienced a succession of fainting fits, to which he had been for two years subject, which were followed by much suffering, and which for a time suspended his powers of recollection. His physician pronounced that if he survived this attack it would be to suffer much pain, and probably also with an impaired understanding. During an interval in the evening of Sunday, 'I am in a very distressed state,' he said, alluding apparently to his bodily condition. 'Yes,' it was answered, 'but you have your feet on the Rock.' 'I do not venture,' he replied, 'to speak so positively; but I hope I have.' And after this expression of his humble trust, with but one groan, he entered into that world where pain and doubt are forever at an end. He died at three o'clock in the morning of Monday, July 29th, aged 73 years and 11 months."

It had been the wish of Mr. Wilberforce that his remains should be deposited with those of his sister and daughter, in a private vault at Stoke Newington, a suburb of London. Immediately, however, on the fact of his death being made known, the Lord Chancellor

(Brougham) presented to the family a request, signed by William Frederick, (afterward King William IV.,) and more than thirty Peers and nearly one hundred members of the House of Commons of all parties, that he should be buried in Westminster Abbey. To this wish his family consented, and the body was laid in the North Transept of that depository of Britain's illustrious dead, close to the tombs of the three distinguished statesmen with whom he had shared the toils and anxieties of public life—Pitt, Fox, and Canning. This public honor, though a customary tribute to those who die while holding office as members of the ministry, had never before been accorded to any one who had passed entirely from the arena of active life, as Mr. Wilberforce had done, he not being even a member of Parliament at the time of his death. It was a voluntary tribute of respect, not to his talents nor yet to his public services, but to the consistent Christian character and moral worth of one, who, having by the faithful discharge of his duty, sought that honor which cometh from God only, was thus crowned with the approbation of those who could appreciate at its true value this consistent devotion of a life not to penance and retirement, but to diligent labor for the good of those for whom Christ died. "For departed kings there are appointed honors; and the rich and noble have their gorgeous obsequies. It was his portion to have so lived that by his death a people was clothed in mourning, as a spontaneous tribute to his worth; and to go down to the grave amid the benedictions of the poor and oppressed of three quarters of the globe." It can fall to the lot of few indeed to occupy a position so elevated. His was that of the servant with the five talents; but from every one God requires

according to that he hath and not according to that he hath not; and if it was his to shine

*"Velut inter stellas Luna, minores,"*

it may be the delight of each, "according to his several ability," to occupy, till His coming, that which his Lord hath committed to his trust; and the welcome into the "joy of the Lord" of the despised martyr, whose ashes flew no one knows whither, will not be less glorious than that of the servant whose body sleeps, whether with his fathers or amid the storied urns and monumental glories of earth's great and good; since every servant of the King of Glory, each one in the several portion assigned to him, is a partaker in his own degree of that measure of his Master's joy which shall be to him the perfect consummation of bliss. His sons remark: "His Christian faith was from first to last his talisman of happiness. Without it, the buoyancy of his youthful spirits led to a frivolous waste of life, not more culpable than unsatisfying. With it came lofty conceptions—an energy which triumphed over sickness and languor, the coldness of friends and the violence of enemies—a calmness not to be provoked—a perseverance which repulse could not baffle. To these virtues was owing the happiness of his active days. Through the power of the same sustaining principle, his affection toward his fellow-creatures was not dulled by the intercourse of life, nor his sweetness of temper impaired by the irritability of age. A firm trust in God, an undeviating submission to His will, an overflowing thankfulness—these maintained in him to the last that cheerfulness which this world could neither give nor take away. They poured, even upon his earthly pilgrimage, the an-

anticipated radiance of that brighter region, to which he has now doubtless been admitted. For 'the path of the just is like the shining light, which shineth more and more unto the perfect day.' "







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